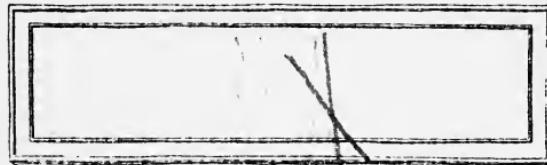
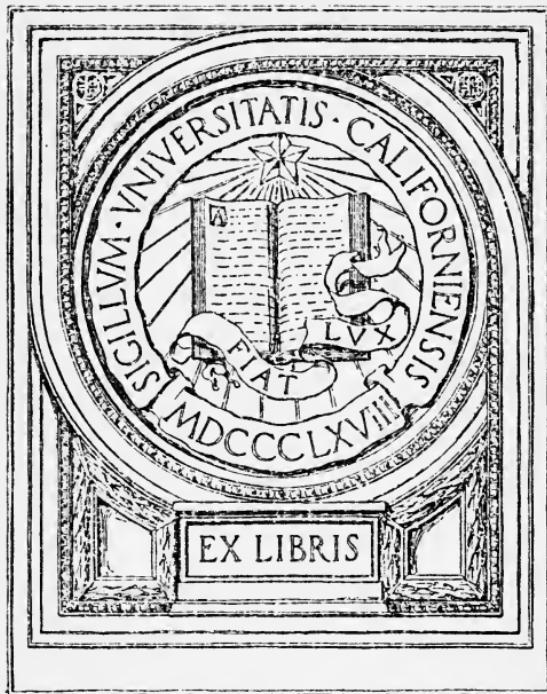


JEHOVAH

By  
CLEMENT WOOD







**J E H O V A H**

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

---

Poetry:

GLAD OF EARTH

THE EARTH TURNS SOUTH

Fiction:

MOUNTAIN: A Novel

---

E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY  
NEW YORK

# JEHOVAH

BY  
CLEMENT WOOD



E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY  
NEW YORK

NEW YORK  
E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY  
681 FIFTH AVENUE

Copyright, 1920, by  
E. P. DUTTON & CO.

*All Rights Reserved*

THE  
SCHOOL  
LIBRARY  
COLLECTION

*Printed in the United States of America*

PS3545  
8471554  
1920  
MAIN

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. THE COVENANT UNDER SINAI . . . . .	3
II. THE WINNING OF THE MOUNTAIN . . . . .	12
III. THE BEAST FROM THE RIVER . . . . .	23
IV. A WOMAN OF TYRE . . . . .	30
V. THE SWORD IN THE STORM . . . . .	41
VI. THE BLOOD DOOM . . . . .	49
VII. THE MARCHING OF THE GIANTS . . . . .	58
VIII. SEVEN DAYS . . . . .	69
IX. THE KING'S WORD . . . . .	78
X. THE DREAM OF ZADOK . . . . .	86
XI. A PROPHET IN ISRAEL . . . . .	96
XII. THE GOD GROWS . . . . .	105
NOTES . . . . .	115

439445



**J E H O V A H**



## THE PERSONS

### THE HEBREWS

*JOAB, chief of the hosts of David, and nephew to the king*

*ABISHAI, Joab's brother*

*BENAIAH, mightiest of the host*

*JEHOSHAPHAT, chief recorder of the king*

*ZADOK, one of the two high priests of the king*

*JOTHAM, of Succoth in Gilead, an insurgent prophet*

### THE KENITE ENVOYS

*Uz, the patriarch*

*SHAAPH, the singer*

*JETHER, the warrior*

*Time: B. C. 1034, the crest of David's conquering reign*

*Place: An opening in the wilderness southwest of Edom. The forces of David, in their swing of southern conquest, are met by envoys from the Kenites, a tribe dwelling around Mount Sinai. The envoys ask peace instead of subjection for the tribe, on the ground that it served Jehovah even before Moses learned the worship from his father-in-law, Jethro the Kenite.*



# JEHOVAH

---

## I. THE COVENANT UNDER SINAI

### 1

Joab, the leader of the hosts of David,  
The king's own nephew, and the craftiest man  
In all that tide that scoured the southern deserts  
To bring all peoples under the swelling rule  
Of Israel and Jehovah, answered at last.  
“ Well, speak your word,” he grudged to the Kenite  
envoys.

The oldest rose: a claw-hand whipping free  
His goat-hair mantle, till a sapless face,  
Shrivelled to black eyes scorching them sullenly,  
Broke clear, opened a beak-like mouth, and spoke:

“ I, Uz the Kenite, saw the thing!  
My live eyes looked thru eyes long dead,  
This tongue is shaken with the words  
Of lips crumbled to drifting sand.

“ I speak the words that Tirath the Kenite spoke,  
Tirath, a stripling, who lay at Jethro's feet,

## ***JEHOVAH***

When that head priest of Jehovah called to his knees  
Aaron and all of the elders, as he made  
Them and the desert children the blood sons  
Of thundering Jehovah! I speak the words  
That Tirath, old and dying, told to Jair,  
And Jair, as he was dying, shared with Jahdai,  
And he, the ancient head priest, whispered to me,  
A learner before Jehovah. Listen well!

### **2**

" Before the Mount of Jehovah opens a plain,  
Rising to two gate-hills. Tirath lay stretched  
Upon the sunset one, wearied and winded.  
He had run long and swiftly, and he lay  
Watching the winding rocky bed below him,  
That nested wrathful floods in the rainy months,  
Flown now, leaving a boulder-cluttered passage  
Slicing the riven hills, two tawny tent-walls  
Spreading apart to the sky. Wearied, he slept.

" And then he woke—and for a wavering moment,  
As sleep held close the curtains of his soul,  
He thought the rainy months had come again:  
An uneven flood washed down the rocky bed,  
An uneasy muddied river. His vision righted.  
Between the gate-hills cleaving to Sinai's plain  
A flood of men and women and children pushed,  
A river of driven cattle and herded sheep,  
Roaring thru the defile, dividing the hills.  
A noise of broken shouting, tired singing,

### **4**

## **THE COVENANT UNDER SINAI**

Low, bleating, the incoherent brawl  
Of a swollen hill-stream, lifted to his ears.  
And Tirath fastened his shirt and his sandal thongs,  
And fled from the sunset hill to the tent of Jethro,  
And told of this queer stream the dry months brought.

“ These were your fathers, O children of David!  
These were the desert brethren of Moses,  
Loin-seeds of Abraham, Isaac, Israel,  
Choosing Jehovah—chosen of Jehovah! ”

### **3**

The beak-mouth closed, the hot eyes hooded themselves,  
Abruptly turning to face the broken South,  
Staring as if thru hill and empty desert  
To that far mount of his god.

David's head captains,  
Joab and Abishai, his own brother's sons,  
And huge Benaiah, mightiest of the host,  
Nodded in tardy agreement; and the rest,  
The strong men and recorders, bowed after them;  
And a forced murmur struggled from them: “ True!  
These were our fathers.”

Uz began again,  
As if his claw hand painted against the sky  
The distant things he saw. “ So Tirath knew them,  
And saw that strange procession wind to the mount—

### **5**

## *JEHOVAH*

A moving people clothed in the sacking of slaves,  
Yet wearing mantles of tattered Memphian silk,  
Caught fast with briars; and the thong-scarred arms  
Heavy with Egyptian bracelets of red gold  
And noisy jewels. Jethro came to meet them,  
His daughter, Moses' wife, with her two boys  
Shrinking behind, so timidly joyful to see  
The husband she had god-sped to far Egypt  
Back, and unharmed. Moses bowed to the ground  
Before the priest of Jehovah, then straightened himself  
And kissed his cheek, and went into his tent.  
Tirath went too; there Moses spoke these things:

### 4

#### *A Song of the Flight*

It is done! Jehovah gloriously triumphed—  
All our foes are scattered by his storming anger,  
And we are his children now and evermore!

I stole down to Egypt, and I found my people—  
They who had been princes of the rolling grasslands—  
Lashed and hopeless captives, bricklayers, ditch-diggers,  
Scorned and cowed. I told them of the god of Sinai,  
He who holds the mountain and its fiery tempests,  
He whose raging power I had seen and pondered  
When I watched your sheep under his awful summit.  
So I told my people the thundering god would save  
them. . . .

What did peaceful Egypt know of flaming thunder?

## *THE COVENANT UNDER SINAI*

What could fertile plainlands guess of wild Jehovah?  
If he shook his shaggy head, and roared against them,  
All their jackal gods would whine away in terror!

And my people heard me—for the land was restless  
From a year of horror, plagues and direful griefs.  
And one bloody midnight out our thousands hastened,  
Leaving red reminders we were men, not cattle!  
Bearing spoils—these bracelets, silks and crimson  
raiment—  
For their noble owners would not need them further.

Then we reached the sea—but our flight grew slower,  
And the cowed and wearied people lagged and mur-  
mured.

And we heard behind us now the ominous thunder  
Of the pharaoh's horsemen, and his creaking chariots.  
“Has your hill-imp led us to this sea—to perish?”  
“No!” I cried. “Jehovah—look!—is here above you!”  
For a growling storm-cloud pulsed and swelled and  
threatened,  
And a flash within it showed Jehovah watched us!

Then the east wind bellowed all the tossing night-hours,  
Till the sea was riven, and the damp sand beckoned!  
All the night we stumbled over the perilous passage,  
While Jehovah's anger lashed the frightened heavens.

Then the dawn. The foemen saw the slaves escaping,  
Rode and drove and stumbled onto the perilous passage.

## ***JEHOVAH***

Frightened horses floundered, sand clenched tight the  
chariots,—

And Jehovah quieted the raging winds—and back  
Swirled the chidden water in a driven turmoil,  
Till the pharoah's horsemen and his creaking chariots  
All were overwhelmed in the watery death.

So it was Jehovah gloriously triumphed,  
Hurling horse and rider in the sea—to perish,  
Scattering the enemies of the sons of Abraham,  
Isaac, and Israel—this our god has done.  
So it is forever we have chosen Jehovah  
As our god, and he takes us for his children,  
Still to lead us onward to the land of Canaan,  
To the land I promised, in the great one's name.

Chief of gods, we serve him! There is no god greater  
Than the god of Israel, Sinai's great Jehovah!

### **5**

He ceased; and there was silence. Joab sat  
Twiddling a leather tassel on his buckler,  
His face granite. Benaiah's eyes froze open,  
Watching the ancient envoy. “ Moses said that?”

Another tongue broke in, ringing like silver  
Tapped for a signal, precise and musical,  
Yet too precise—Jehoshaphat, the chief  
Recorder of the king. “ Moses said that,  
Or most of it. So the law runs.”

### **8**

## *THE COVENANT UNDER SINAI*

But Uz

Eyed the harsh granite face, and spoke again:  
“No, all of it—for Tirath heard it all,  
And so I have it. Jethro lifted his joy,  
‘Now do I know our Jehovah greatest of gods!’  
For he was ours, remember, from his beginning.  
Then Jethro made a burnt offering, till the savor  
Grew sweet in Jehovah’s nostrils, as he leaned  
Out of his heaven to share the pungent feast  
Prepared by his faithful children; and Jethro called  
Aaron and all of the elders to eat bread  
With him before the god, and become his children.  
Then the priest taught to Moses Jehovah’s ways,  
And how to judge the people; and he sent him  
To find upon the mount the graven laws  
Jehovah ordered.

/

### 6

“And the time drew on  
When scowling clouds drove northward. ‘You may go;  
Jehovah wills it,’ Jethro told him. Moses  
Bade him farewell. ‘For we go on to Canaan,  
The land I promised in the great one’s name,  
And look—Jehovah, in his cloud, will lead us!’

“But Jethro pondered, and said: ‘He will not lead you;  
His storming mountain is his eternal home,  
For so he swore when first he won it. Yet  
His angel—a cloud by day, a flame by night—  
Will point the tedious journey to your goal.’

## **JEHOVAH**

“It will be tedious?”

“Long and full of dangers,  
A land for iron swords, not jingling bracelets.  
There are great men, and great gods, there before you,  
Giants and sons of giants, sky-piercing towns—”

“Could we live here among you?”

“The land is small,  
The herbage cropped clean in the dusty season;  
You shall go forth; Jehovah’s angel is with you.”

“Moses came closer. ‘Let us have a guide,—  
Hobab, your son. If he will go before ,  
Eyes for our blindness, he shall be a prince  
Among us.’ So it was.

“Now came the hour;  
Moses stood out, and cried aloud to the sky,  
‘Rise up, Jehovah! Let thine enemies  
Be scattered! Let them that hate thee flee before  
thee!’

The shrine, borne on a litter—the graven laws  
Carried within—moved forward. Down the plain  
The flood of men and women and children pushed,  
The river of driven cattle and herded sheep  
Filled the defile between the guarding hills.  
The dulling roar of shout and psalm and tumult  
Faded away; the hill gap opened and swallowed  
The last drab stragglers—and the trodden plain,

## *THE COVENANT UNDER SINAI*

That had been carpeted with crawling life,  
Lay empty as a goblet drained and dried.

“These were your fathers, warriors of David!  
These were the wandering brethren of Moses,  
Loin-seeds of Abraham, Isaac, Israel,  
Chosen of Jehovah—choosing Jehovah!”

## II. THE WINNING OF THE MOUNTAIN

### 1

Sour Joab, leader of the hosts of David,  
Had sat with scornful face thru the long story.  
He leapt to his feet, before the lips of Uz  
Had time to lock,—driving his two-edged sword,  
Three cubits in the blade, into the ground.  
His moon-eyes glared upon the shriveled hulk  
That spoke for the Kenites. “What talk is this?” he  
cried.

“Jehovah on Sinai? His eternal home?  
You do not know the god you spend such breath on!  
He dwells on Zion—in Jerusalem!  
Is it not so, recorder?”

### Jehoshaphat

Narrowed his eyes; he stored no harvest of love  
For this too-ready tool of the distant king.  
“I could say ‘yes’ to you, and not say all;  
I could say ‘no,’ and still not err completely.  
The law says, as this winter-blighted Uz  
Has told, Jehovah’s angel led the tribes  
Out of the desert, into the land of promise.  
When Deborah judged the land, and smote the Canaan-  
ites,  
Jehovah hastened from Sinai to aid his people.

## *THE WINNING OF THE MOUNTAIN*

And prophets and mighty men have journeyed there  
To talk with the god of Israel. . . . Hear me further:  
When the great plague ravaged the tribes, King David  
Saw in a vision the angel of death approaching,  
Sickling his grass; and saw Jehovah stay him  
Over the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite.  
There, there he saw Jehovah; and Gad the prophet—  
A voice of God, not a mere braying wind-storm  
Like that mad Jotham that skulks within the villages—  
Ordered the king to build an altar there  
Unto our god; you, Joab, know this well.  
There stands the altar on the mount of Zion,  
In holy Jerusalem; there Abiathar  
And Zadok, the king's priests, consult the god  
Before the ephod; the temple will be there,—  
And there Jehovah dwells in all his splendor!"

### 2

The line of Kenites crescented round Uz  
Shook like a curtain teased by a sudden wind;  
A sultry murmur buzzed among them. At last  
The eldest again stepped forth. "We have heard the  
recorder;  
Yet kings may err like ordinary men."  
His glowing black eyes scorched them' straightly.  
"Heed!  
You are sons of Jehovah; so you may hear further.  
Profane ears can not hear these secret things.  
We stretch a hedge-hog's skin on the full udders  
Of cows, that serpents may not suck—so we

## *JEHOVAH*

Stretch the taut skin of silence over our lips  
Upon these matters, lest unbelieving serpents  
Listen and learn Jehovah's hidden things.  
Yet you may hear. This youth—" he laid a paw,  
Skinny and lizard-like, upon the head,  
Sun-golden, of a boy beside him,—“ is Shaaph,  
The son's own son of Jahdai. You have said  
That your King David sings before the Lord;  
We say that Shaaph can charm summer's young doves  
Out of their nests, and rival the soft song  
Of winds rocking the lily-buds to sleep.  
He knows the songs of Jehovah; he will sing you  
How this great hunter won Mount Sinai first,  
And of his oath. This also—" as the boy  
Quietly came, at his call. “Jethro you know of;  
Now his grandfather's father was Jehovah—  
A man, as you and I; or more than we,  
Six cubits tall, a giant—yet a man.  
And what he was, and what he did, these songs  
Tell, in the words of men who knew him, felt  
His playful stroke that doubled them to the earth,  
And knew him even after he won his mountain.  
Now, Shaaph.”

The boy came slowly, gravely forward,]  
Sky in his eyes, sun in his hair. Softly  
He struck stray notes, then all at once his voice  
Soared in the song of Sinai and Jehovah.

## *THE WINNING OF THE MOUNTAIN*

### 3

#### *Jehovah Wins His Mountain*

Jehovah was a mighty man, twelve spans tall!  
His face was like a desert lion, his legs like rooted oaks;  
His spear was nine full cubits long; his blow could  
brain a bear;  
The valleys trembled at his tread, the hills bowed low!

The hills were humbled where he walked—but one stood  
straight:

The Mount of Sinai trembled not, its echoes mocked  
his tread.

“Go not upon that hill,” they cried. “It is the hill of  
Sin,

Of Sin who rules the ancient moon, the father of the  
gods!”

Jehovah laughed a rumbling laugh that made men  
quake;

“I’ve climbed upon its baldest peak—and seen no  
skulking god!”

“But not at night; the blackest night his spirit guards  
each stone—

And when the moon is full, to climb is death—chill  
death!”

Jehovah laughed a rumbling laugh that made rocks  
dance.

## ***JEHOVAH***

"I need a hill to live upon—and storms can quench the moon.

I go to-night—the moon is dark—to test his spirit, learn What Sin, who fires the feeble moon, will dare tell me!"

The night was black as raven's down, the stars shrunk small;

Jehovah left the valley tents, their crimson watchfires glowing;

And as he made the lowest steep, the howls of beasts broke round him.

Jehovah's laughter thundered once—the black night hushed.

Jehovah climbed the second height—the air grew thick, His eyes went blind, his body swayed, his great spear fell and shivered.

He plunged ahead, tearing the trees and rocks apart— still climbing—

Until he reached the third steep, with the last peak next!

He touched the great lone naked stone that pierced Sin's sky,—

And all at once his heart became a chilling, gripping torment.

Why had he dared this throw with death? Dead bones grew white and brittle;

There still was time to plunge to life—those far tent fires—

Then suddenly he saw . . . This was the last stern test!

## **THE WINNING OF THE MOUNTAIN**

He bade his heart scorch warm again, he swung and  
clambered upward,  
From crack to crevice, till the crest lay gray and flat  
beneath him.  
Sinai was his,—at least until the moon shone full.

Sinai was his! Within the blackness storm clouds grew,  
The thunder sang, the lightning split the solid head of  
darkness.

And by the storm Jehovah swore, that, could he win the  
mountain,  
His feet would never leave it—it, his own hill home!

The tribesmen stared in horror at the man's mad deed.  
“Great Sin has spared you once—the gods will play at  
times with men.

But tempt him not again—” Jehovah's eyes were  
granite pebbles.

“At full moon I shall seek the god—and win Sin's  
hill!”

The pallid crescent swelled, until the moon's round  
shield

Hung on the wall of heaven; the uneasy cattle lowed,  
The sheep bleated, the troubled men moved the tents  
further off. . . .

And great Jehovah knew the night, and sought Sin's  
crest.

He bore a sword of beaten iron, of eight spans length;  
He bore a spear with iron head, mightier than the first;

## **JEHOVAH**

He bore a buckler, and a knife keener than winter cold;  
He left the empty plain, he stood beneath Sin's hill.

The moonlight lay like silver dew on rock and whimpering leaf. . . .

His withered shadow crouched and cowered, fearing the silver fire.

And all the stars were thin with dread—the night was heavy with light,

A hateful beautiful light, like sunlight drained of its living gold

A dead and hateful light: but off to the south Jehovah saw

A scar of black, a low-grown cloud, climbing the moon-white sky.

"It climbs as I," he marveled. "Let it mount, and shroud the sky,

As I shall shroud this ancient god in my great arms."

Out of the the night two lions sprang, with frightful sibilant rush.

The sword crashed twice, biting the marrow—and broke within his hand.

Thrown by an unseen giant, a rock vast as a tent fell on him;

But he stood taut, with buckler raised—the stone slid off.

Jehovah drove the spear-point at the hid giant's heart;  
It splintered—and he mounted still. A leopard sprang upon him—

## THE WINNING OF THE MOUNTAIN

And, caught on the lifted knife, screamed out a final gibberish warning.

He flung the knife away, and climbed the last great stone.

And now upon the flat gray crest he stood once more,  
Unarmed, wearied, sore,—when out of nothing hardened  
a form,

An ancient giant, with swirling beard that swept the  
moon-white stones—

And up the sky, Jehovah saw, that black cloud stole:

“What are you,” cried the moon-faced giant, “who  
dares death so?”

His long beard glowed. “Know you that I am Sin,  
the chief of gods?

Father of Shamash, god of the sun—and this my sacred  
hill?”

“But you have many hills—I would have this mine  
own.

“Listen, great Sin—what say you if we pit bare  
strengths—

God strength against man strength, and the stronger  
win the prize?”

“Back from this spot!” But suddenly Jehovah seized  
the god,—

And back and forth they clung and strained on the  
stone’s harsh floor.

Jehovah knew how to wrestle, with a fiend’s shrewd  
craft;

## ***JEHOVAH***

Barehanded once he had flung a giant thrice his size—  
and killed him.

And soon, while that black cloud edged near, and  
stained the moon's round splendor,  
The two bowed, bent unto their knees, winded, half  
spent.

“Now shall we rest?” Sin cried. “I'll bid that cloud  
speed off—”

The lightning spit from out its heart, the growl of  
thunder threatened,

The hill grew dark. “I cannot see,” cried Sin, “let  
me make light!”

Jehovah laughed within himself, and bent Sin more.

And now he felt his knees bound with small live cords—  
The moon god's swirling beard clung close, and rooted  
him to the rock.

“If you will use it, so can I!” He caught the silvery  
flood,

And laced it taut around the moon-giant's thin old neck.

The night grew blacker—all the moon was hid—winds  
shrieked,

A tempest lashed the crest; still man and god strove  
and struggled.

The hours inched on; the gray dawn flung its first thin  
wavering promise;

The moon shone for a glimpse below the black cloud's  
wing.

## *THE WINNING OF THE MOUNTAIN*

But now the climb, and the long strain, had spent  
man's strength;  
Jehovah weakened, and the god's old fingers found his  
throat,  
Deeper and deeper clenching. "Fire of the cloud,"  
Jehovah gasped,  
"Sword of the lightning, strike!" It struck . . . the  
god shook, dazed.

Loosed hand and voice. "Come let me fly, before day  
dawns,  
Or he who rules the sun will come and drive me out  
forever!  
My moon car sinks—" "The mount is mine?" Jehovah  
cried in triumph.  
"The mount is yours," said Sin; and rose and fled day's  
light.

And then Jehovah stretched his height—the great god  
conqueror!  
And swore an oath by Sinai's storms never to leave its  
summit!  
And there he dwells in all his power, god of the thunder  
and lightning,  
God of the fiery tempest—god of our tribe, and yours—  
Jehovah!"

## *JEHOVAH*

### 4

Shaaph came to the end of the stirring song. The  
Kenites

Echoed the close: "God of the fiery tempest,  
God of our tribe, and yours—Jehovah!"

### *Joab*

And all of the men of Israel sat for a time  
Watching the sun poised on the desert's rim,  
Red-eyed and swollen, then loiter out of sight,  
While crimson curtains of glory covered the sky.  
Benaiah broke the red silence, speaking low:  
"Yes, he was a mighty man."

"Not our Jehovah,"

Joab tagged on, yet with a glow in his voice  
Lit by the song. "We know no vow like this.  
If your Jehovah made it, how could he come  
In aid of Deborah?" He drove out the question,  
Then leaned back proudly; there was a crafty trap!

Uz did not pause. "He left his mountain often,  
But not to live. He was a hunter, remember;  
He hunted from one sky-rim to the other.  
Shall Jether, here, sing of his mighty slayings?"

But Joab shook his head. "The sun is hid,  
Our men are uneasy with hunger. When we have  
eaten,  
It will be time to hear these marvelous deeds!"

### III. THE BEAST FROM THE RIVER

#### 1

The Kenites gathered first at the council place,  
Where now a young fire burned, the red-gold flames  
Crackling and quarreling. The Israelites came.  
Each saw the other reddened by the glare,  
As if the crimson sun had left this reminder  
To warm the dark. Glum Joab, who led the host,  
Held silence; but Benaiah, a kindlier chief,  
Who had lifted up his spear and slain three hundred  
Hated Philistines at one killing, spoke  
In greeting. "Let us hear your singers further.  
We would learn more of this man-god Jehovah,  
Who seems so like, and so unlike, our own.  
The king's recorder teaches me that the law  
Tells of this covenant beneath Mount Sinai.  
'Jehovah made not this covenant with our fathers,  
But with us here, who are all alive this day,'  
Said Moses. Yet we know not your Jehovah—  
Half man, half god—man first, god-conqueror,  
And lastly god himself. Speak further of him."

"You shall hear Jether sing the wondrous slayings  
Of this great hunter, Jehovah. Heed his song!"

## *JEHOVAH*

Jether arose, a fighter whose either arm  
Could hurl a boulder a hundred cubits, with strength  
To kill as it struck. Thus he began, and sang:

### 2

#### *The Slaying of the Beast*

Lift up your voices in praise—  
Praise to the hunter, Jehovah!  
Swift as the roe in the chase,  
Bold as the leopard in daring,  
Strong as the lion in his leap!  
Praise to the slayer, Jehovah!

Who is this steals thru the shadowy wood,  
Quiet as the shadow of leaves on a pool,  
Hairy of face, and as shaggy of head?  
This is Jehovah, the slayer of beasts!

Once let the shaft leave his terrible bow,  
Antelope, fallow deer, roe and wild bull,  
Even the unicorn, loftiest of prey,  
Grow into venison's savory meat!

Swarms of wild boar know the bite of his shot—  
Leopard and bear fear the terror that flies;  
Lions, and wolves, their jaws red from the feast,  
Die by their prey—with the shaft in their hearts!

Lift up your bows at his name—  
He is the hunter, Jehovah!

## *THE BEAST FROM THE RIVER*

Swift as the swallow in flight,  
Fierce as the hawk in his darting,  
Strong as the eagle—to kill!  
Praise to the slayer, Jehovah!

Mighty Jehovah, the slayer of beasts,  
Tired of the slaughter of creatures so small.  
“Where is a prey that a hunter may seek  
Worthy his utmost, most arduous toil? ”

Maon, the wise man, whose years were as sand,  
Answered him: “There is one beast that no hunter  
Ever has sought—and no slayer can slaughter:  
The beast from the river—the behemoth beast!”

“Yet I will seek him!” Jehovah replied.  
Turning from Maon, he journeyed three moons  
Till he had come to the edge of the stream  
Where the great behemoth wallowed and slept.

This is the mightiest of beasts.  
Behold, he will drink up a river,  
Devour all that moves in a land,  
Still rage in thirst and in hunger!  
He has no like, east or west—  
Behemoth, mightiest of beasts!

When the first Baal made beasts of the land,  
After long toil he grew sore of the task.  
“All I have left I will shape in one beast—”  
Lo, what was left was as high as a hill!

## *JEHOVAH*

Yet he had spoken—and out of the heap  
Baal made behemoth, tall as a mountain.  
Nothing remained to be shaped for a mate—  
Lonely it dwelt in the hills and the fens.

There in the river Jehovah could see  
Behemoth breathing, a slumbering hill.  
Back to the forest he hastened, and cut  
Lebanon's kingliest tree, for a bow;

Circled by Tyre, and uncorded the fleets,  
Twisting the rope for a string; as the shaft,  
Took a tall oak from his mountain—and came  
Back to the edge of the behemoth's stream.

Still the beast slumbered. Jehovah laughed once,  
And his great thunder voice wakened the prey.  
Startled, it rose, till its back rasped the clouds—  
Then toward the hunter it started its course.

Now was the time, while the eye of the beast,  
Dazed by the sunlight, blinked open. His bow  
Rested at foot on the earth, while the top  
Pressed on the wall of the sky. Taut he drew

Bow-string, his hand on the shaft-notch—he aimed  
At the sun-eye of the beast—and let go!  
Straight as a bee in its flying it sped,  
Clear to the heart of the menacing eye!

## *THE BEAST FROM THE RIVER*

Lift up your joy at the shot  
Made by the hunter, Jehovah!  
Straight to the threatening eye  
Hastened the shaft of his slaughter.  
Never a hunter like him!  
Praise for the slayer, Jehovah!

Out leapt the blood, like a hill-stream in spring  
Swollen with burden of snow in its melting.  
Both eyes were blinded—and straight toward the sea-  
way  
Floundered the beast, with the death-shaft still in!

Over the sea leant a mountainous cliff;  
And the blind beast crashed in death from its height.  
Blood from his agony dyed the sea red—  
Still it is red from the behemoth's blood.

Then a vast tidal wave rolled on the land;  
Great ships at sea broke and sank from the tossing;  
And the beast's carcass, a huge slaughtered island,  
Floated out over the rim of the sea.

He, the god-slayer, for sign of his deed  
And token of triumph, hung in the sky  
This his great bow, inlaid with rich jewels—  
Jasper and emerald, beryl and agate.

Onyx and amethyst, sapphire and diamond,—  
Stretching the sky, from one rim to the other.

## *JEHOVAH*

Still you can see it in all of its splendor,  
After Jehovah has thundered in tempest!

Lift up your voices in praise,  
Praise to the hunter, Jehovah!  
For he has slaughtered the beast,  
Slain the great mountain-like behemoth.  
Praise you his bow in the sky—  
Praise the great slayer, Jehovah!

### 3

Jehoshaphat, the king's recorder, rose  
After the song of Jether reached its ending,  
His thin face working in its eagerness.  
“Now there the law is different from your song.  
We learn Jehovah placed his bow in heaven  
After the flood he sent over all the earth  
To wash wickedness away. He spared one man,  
One good man, Noah; and he promised him,  
After the flood had lessened, and the waters  
Were gone from the mountains, and Noah built an altar,  
And the savor was sweet within Jehovah's nostrils,  
He promised him to send no other flood  
To waste the earth and man; and for a token  
He set his bow in a cloud, for a reminder  
Of what he swore.”

Old Uz the Kenite pondered  
And spoke: “At least, Jehovah set his bow  
In the heaven, as a token,—and if a bow

## *THE BEAST FROM THE RIVER*

He must have been a hunter. For the rest,  
We sing the song who best should know the song."

The Israelites were silent; Jehoshaphat  
Worried his mind, weighing these bows and floods;  
The others waited his word. But lordly Joab  
Laughed at the man's discomfort. "It is true,  
A bow must mean a hunter. Tell me further.  
Perhaps your god—or man—whichever you will—  
Desired a woman—or more; for mighty ones  
Are mighty in loving too."

There was no smile  
At his broad jest; for only Joab dared mock  
The amorous king, with his growing brood of women,  
The daughters of strange lands and stranger gods,  
And last Bath-Sheba, whose husband Joab had placed,  
At the king's word, within the front of the troops,  
And left him to perish. Thus Joab dared his joke.  
"Did Jehovah lust for a woman?"

The face of Uz  
Lit like an ancient parchment in front of a candle.  
"Come, Shaaph, again—and sing the song they call  
for."

## IV. A WOMAN OF TYRE

### 1

Shaaph, at the summons, lifted his dreaming fancies  
Back from the glowing crimson heart of the coals.  
His eyes were sunset heavens, flame upon blue,  
His hair tassels of dusky gold. He tested  
His harp, and then began; and as he sang  
The flame, red-glowing, became the warp of his song:

### 2

#### *A Song of Jehovah's Desire*

The silver trumpets of spring  
Pealed thru the valleys;  
Their faint echoes climbed to the peaks.  
The armies of the grass  
Lifted together their green spear-heads,  
Clashing them.  
The golden arms of the willows beckoned,  
The hill-stream was a torrent,  
And valley and hill shook with an old disquiet,  
The stir of mating!

Jehovah spoke from his hill:  
“I will get me a wife—

## *A WOMAN OF TYRE*

This is the season of wiving.  
Yet among the daughters of Midian  
There is none that pleases me,  
Nor among the cow-eyed women of the Kenites.  
I am tired of the harlots of Edom,  
And the limp breasts of Gaza.  
There is but one for whom I long—  
She whom I saw in the temple at Tyre,  
She whom they call Asherah of Tyre.

“When my heart dwells upon her,  
I tremble like the shadow of a bird  
On rippled water.  
My body is flame striving with ice;  
My limbs weaken; I thirst greatly.  
I have no joy in the day,  
I have no rest in the night.

“I shall journey to Tyre, to the temple,  
To Asherah, for whom I long!”

### 3

#### *A Song of Asherah*

Who is this who stands upon the wharves,  
Above the quarreling waves,  
A giant among children?  
His face is an angry lion,  
His shoulders are twin hills,  
His legs are young cedars of the mountain.

## ***JEHOVAH***

His wrath is a hungry lion—  
He has lifted up his spear in anger  
And slain a thousand of the guardians of Baal!

He comes toward me, thru the people,  
Like a sun dividing clouds,  
Like an oak striding thru brambles.

I shall withdraw into the court,  
And veil myself in subtle things.

### **4**

#### *A Song of Jehovah*

Return with me to my mountain,  
To Sinai, home of the storm-clouds!  
Here, where you dwell, it is the time of sowing;  
The mating songs of birds  
Thrill in sweet incompleteness.

Where you are not, it is winter—  
Naked trees lift shivering arms in prayer,  
Knowing they can not green but at your coming.  
The bear sleeps on, the grasshoppers do not awake,  
There is a frozen death without you.

### **5**

#### *A Song of Asherah*

What are you, Jehovah of the hill?  
Why should I hear you?

## *A WOMAN OF TYRE*

Ashtoreth, they say truly—old cow god—  
Is the mother of all;  
I am the lover of all.

From the four corners of the sky they come,  
My lovers come, to press my proud bosom.  
In blue and vermillion they are clothed,  
Kings, and the gods of kings:  
Chemosh, the great lord of Moab,  
Milcolm, the mighty slayer of Ammon,  
And Dagon, man head and fish body,  
A terrible god, swimming from Philistia.  
Bel-Marduk, the lord of wide rivers,  
Left the bed of his mate in Babylon;  
Osiris came up from Egypt,  
Riding bridled leviathan.

There was one among them, Baal of Tyre,  
The god of seeding and harvest,  
Who made the dust blossom.  
He was the guardian of great fleets,  
Lacing the earth's waters.  
From the four corners of the sky  
He brought their traffic to me—  
Slaves from the land of blue-skinned men,  
The land whose bowels are tin;  
Spikenard, cassia, ebony and myrrh  
Out of the eastern sky-rim;  
Ivory and apes from the burnt south,  
Jewels frozen in the north.  
They have set my images, to honor me,  
In all the ways of the world,

## *JEHOVAH*

Wherever green grows.  
And this great Baal, god of Tyre,  
Of blossom and harvest, of landway and seaway,  
I took for my lover.

He is terrible in war!  
He has conquered two hundred kings,  
And cut off their thumbs and their great toes  
As a tribute for me.  
He has conquered a thousand rulers of provinces,  
And made them eunuchs to wait upon me.

What are you, Jehovah of the wastes?  
Go back to your little hill.  
I am the lover of all,—  
I am the lover of Baal of Tyre!

### 6

Jehovah's wrath grew like an autumn fire.  
The sky darkened in terrible frowning,  
His thunder voice reached over the Tyrian sea,  
Even to the twin gates of the western waters.  
The breast of the deep heaved and trembled.  
The lightning flamed from out his eyes,  
And the fleets of Baal's ships  
Burst into flames and tumult,  
And sank into the beaten waters.

Jehovah's wrath calmed;  
He turned to the woman of his desire, and spoke:

## *A WOMAN OF TYRE*

### *A Song of Jehovah*

Where is Baal, guardian of his fleets?  
He shall sink where his fleets are!

Well for him that he is on a journey,  
Leading his valorous thousands  
Against some saucy village!

What if he wall you up  
Here in his island city?  
This night Sinai's stormy summit  
Shall pillow your head!

Strong is a lion in his leap,  
And strong a man in his desire.  
I long for you  
As a parched grassland  
Aches for the soothe of rain;  
As the heart of a harlot of Nineveh  
Grasps at the pay of her harlotry;  
As the antelope longs for the mountain,  
As the speared fish pants for the lake.

Strong am I in desire,  
And stronger to win my desire.  
Are you not fairer than all women?  
Even so is my strength among men!

## *JEHOVAH*

### 7

The silver waves of dreams  
Lapped round the drowsy walls  
Of the island city of Tyre;  
One only watched, unsleeping,  
In the court of the temple—Asherah!

But the night-sky woke and shivered,  
As a storm-cloud out of the south  
Rushed over the deadened city,  
And poised above the temple.

Asherah hid in the darkness,  
Beneath one lamp in the courtyard,  
As the terrible giant strode down  
Out of his cloudy chariot;  
His hair was wild as the storm-cloud,  
His eyes were gleaming lightning!

“Come forth!” he cried in triumph,  
Reaching an arm to grasp her,—  
Yet his arm froze, untouched:

White and terrible she stood there,  
As a sudden lion on a turning;  
Her eyes looked scorn at his weakness,  
His glad strength thinned and withered.

And then her eyes grew soft:  
She swayed toward him in the darkness,

## *A WOMAN OF TYRE*

And a dove's soft whisper reached him:  
“Jehovah, I too desire!”

8

Shaaph paused.

“Well sung!” cried Benaiah.

Jehoshaphat

Lifted a worried face toward him. ‘But this  
Is forbidden! Jehovah was no lover of Asherah!  
The man is as mad as a prophet raving in Judah!’

Benaiah shook his head. “Strange things have been  
In Jerusalem,—and stranger will be. If David  
Marry the daughters of Tyre, and the daughters of  
Egypt,  
Why ban his god from this? Would you have him a  
eunuch?”

Joab laughed too. “I like a tractable heifer.  
Widowed by force! Her place is in Jerusalem,  
With Abigail and Bath-Sheba. The king is merciful  
To widows—even those not of his making.”  
He laughed again—a lone, metallic mirth  
Like pebbles dancing in an urn,—the laugh  
Of a man whose daring leapt from stabbing princes  
To taunting death by jesting of the king.

Benaiah turned to the singer. “Why do you pause?  
Was this the end of the matter?”

Then Shaaph sang on:

## *JEHOVAH*

9

### *A Song of Jehovah*

I shall build a temple upon my mountain,  
Upon the storming crest of Sinai,  
Where I can worship you, O my lover!  
Where all the world can worship you,—  
Where moon and stars can worship you!

### *A Song of Asherah*

I am the temple of love, O my lover,—  
Enter into the temple!

Behold, there is a pleasant court before me,  
With the sweet sounds of birds,  
And theplash of fountains falling—  
Enter into the court!

There is a hall beyond the court,  
With pictures of battles done upon the walls,  
Hung with rich blue and vermillion,—  
Enter into the hall!

And there are rooms beyond the hall,  
Pleasant to wander thru  
And linger in—  
Enter into the rooms!

## *A WOMAN OF TYRE*

There is one inner room  
I keep for myself.  
A tiny room—  
I have locked the door, and lost the key—  
You cannot enter.

See, I have found the key!  
The door is open.

10

### *A Song of Jehovah*

Pillow her head, O long-haired clouds,  
Pillow the rose of her cheek, O clouds,  
As she sleeps in the tired dawn.

I have built her a house for her dwelling,  
With ten thousand pillars of growing oak,  
And ten thousand pillars of growing cedar.  
The leaves of the roof make a sweet whispering,  
The breezes hush as they pass,  
For fear she should waken.

When she wakens, we flash together  
Headlong across the cowed heaven,  
Two flames grown one,  
Two dreams grown one.

Here the eternal ache of spring  
Pauses and loiters.

## *JEHOVAH*

The sweet disquiet does not leave us;  
Each moment lifts with fulfillment,  
And teases with new, wild hunger!

Each moment is a step  
Up an ascending stairway of raptures.  
There is no end to the ecstasy,  
Nor do the feet drag, nor the senses cool,  
In the perilous climb.

We are far yet from the top—  
Nor can we see the top.  
How can we name what none may see?

There is a long sleep there,  
But beyond the sleep—  
Beyond—beyond—

## V. THE SWORD IN THE STORM

### 1

The fire dulled, and grew ashen. The sweet song  
Ended; the singer's voice thinned to an echo,  
The harp-strings trembled to stillness. All who heard  
Crushed close, and praised the singing—all but one,  
Sour Joab. The other leaders wondered that he  
Had spent this day in talking; his usual tongue  
Had been the sharp flesh-cleaving edge of the sword.  
They did not know that long ago the feet  
Of a Cushite runner thumped on the dusty road,  
Bearing a word for David's heart; for Joab  
Remembered his saying, "but him who serves Jehovah  
Put not to the sword." So Joab spoke his doubts,  
Asking the king's word, or that the priests might seek  
Jehovah's will thru the ephod.

Joab smoothed

His troubled face. "Joy to your amorous pair!  
But night hours do not halt; and up the sky  
Trudges that full moon your Jehovah saw,  
The night he wrestled and conquered Sinai's god.  
Yet do not pit him with an Israelite—  
Our father Jacob strove with him, unvanquished.  
Such are our tribesmen." He smiled a flinty smile.

## *JEHOVAH*

“We shall not strive all night with you in singing—  
There is to-morrow. What is life but this,—  
A time to eat, to fight, and then to sleep,  
With now and then a song to freshen our spirits?  
To sleep, then. To-morrow I shall tell the will  
Of David upon these matters.”

So they parted.

## 2

The day woke threatening; the sky was heavy,  
Dismal, sunless. Yet the flash of metal,  
The monotonous trudge of feet, woke with the grayness,  
As David’s further thousands took their places  
In the expanding camp. The Kenites saw.  
Was there indeed no limit to these spoilers?

“They are as many as the stars of heaven,”  
Jether groaned softly.

But Uz unwrinkled a smile:  
“Jehovah’s clouds can sponge out stars and sky!”

The leaders met, and Joab began the speaking:  
“You have been told, men of the Kenites, to bow  
Your neck beneath the ox-yoke of King David  
And Jehovah, god of the children of Israel.  
You say you serve Jehovah; of that later.  
But it is just that you should learn the fate  
Of those who oppose the god-anointed ruler!

## *THE SWORD IN THE STORM*

I cannot harp love-ditties; but I can tell  
How many necks this sword has cracked and broken.  
That I shall tell, in rough—but truthful—words."

### 3

#### *The Wasting of the South*

"Go forth," Lord David said to me,  
"Bid all who live on plain or hill,  
Even to Egypt's borders, bow  
Their necks to the ox-yoke of the king,  
Their souls to the service of Jehovah!  
If they refuse, then let his vengeance  
Fall—that the lands may not forget  
Either the king's might—or the god's!"

The doom against Gath: we ravaged the land,  
Which would not follow the king's word.  
Four sons of the giant led against us,  
Bearing great spears and new-wrought swords.  
Their bodies garnish a vulture feast.  
Their cities we took, their fields we burnt,  
For David the king, and Lord Jehovah!

The doom against Syria: we smote  
The king of Zobah, and took as spoil  
A thousand horsemen, twelve thousand foot,  
And David houghed the chariot horses,  
Save twice a hundred, Jehovah's share.  
And all the Syrians bow as slaves  
To David the king, and Lord Jehovah!

## *JEHOVAH*

The doom against Moab: we made them all,  
Children, women, and men, lie prone  
Upon the ground, in three great lines.  
For Moab defied the king, blasphemed  
The god. And then these tried swords slew  
The first and third lines, neck by neck,  
Children, women, and men—let the second  
Remember, as slaves, the keen-edged power  
Of David the king, and Lord Jehovah!

The doom against Edom: their guilt was great,  
So half a year we swept their fields  
And villages, like an autumn wind  
Lashing the lacy leaves; we slew  
All of the males, sparing none,  
Squaller in arms to failing grandsire.  
They will not soon forget the might  
Of David the king, and Lord Jehovah!

These are the dooms of Lord Jehovah,  
Borne against Gath and Syria,  
Moab, Ammon, Amelek, Edom,  
And all the lands to the rim of Egypt.  
Heed then the word of the king! Or hear  
The word so many hear—of the sword  
Of David the king, and Lord Jehovah!

## 4

“That is my song,” said Joab; and a sneer  
Hung like a cloud above his words, a cloud  
Heavy with threat and menace.

## *THE SWORD IN THE STORM*

### The Kenite ranks

Split like a brook on a rock, and from the midst  
Four stooped and wrinkled grayheads solemnly stepped,  
Bearing a litter, like an Egyptian ark,  
And placed it before Uz. His hot eyes hooded,  
His dried lips rattled a quiet word, and then  
Reverently he spread the litter curtains,  
And raised from its cushion a sword, a giant's weapon  
Eight full spans!—taller than the tallest man  
Who saw it; a huge nicked killer, rusted brown,  
And crusted with something darker. As he raised it,  
The weight humbled his old bent frame; he bowed,  
Staggering three steps forward. Then he stopped,  
Lifted the haft in air, and let the blade  
Find its own scabbard in the yielding soil,  
And tremble, erect.

### The beak-like mouth of Uz

Opened, and words marched out in solemn step:  
“Mighty is Jehovah, and mighty those that serve him!  
Their cause is his, his sword is a sword before them—  
And none can breast the havoc of its stroke!  
You have sung mighty wars Jehovah waged  
On Gath and Syria, Moab, Ammon, Amelek,  
And hated Edom—and your own blade has fallen  
Like pattering hail upon the humbled necks  
Of enemies of the great one and King David.  
Yet, Joab, is your sword a sword like this?  
Eight full spans, topping your helmet—and its weight  
Would disarm you before a silk-cheeked boy!  
This is the sword of Jehovah!”

## ***JEHOVAH***

Old wrinkled Uz

Straightened at the words, till his stooped hulk became  
A lone young fir-tree in a sheltered valley.  
All eyes widened.

“This is the sword of Jehovah!  
When he leapt forth to battle, it sprang before,  
Ripping belly and cleaving skull. His arm  
Alone could swing it; it has the scars of his fights,  
Even the blood of his enemies dried upon it!  
Only its blade have Jehovah’s foemen touched.  
Safe thru the years our priests have guarded it. . . .  
And with this sword do you think we could lose  
Whatever war we waged? On our going forth  
Its lightning thrust leaps first; it is a guardian  
To sleeping camp and village. You have sung  
Your wasting of the lands that hem our border  
Here in the north; now I shall sing the song  
Of this sword, and its smiting of its foes!”

## 5

### *The Sword Goes Forth*

Children of Jehovah, split the sky in triumph!  
Let your shouts set valley, mountain, sky, to ringing!  
For the lord of tempests rose up in his anger,  
Scattering his foemen as ashes in the wind!

First the god grew wrathful with his stubborn children,  
He, our mountain shepherd, teaching love and justice,

## *THE SWORD IN THE STORM*

Brotherhood, to brothers; we despised his teaching,  
Wooed the evil Baals, till his anger waked.

And he sent his scourge, Hadad king of Edom,  
Smiting all the Kenites, yes, and all of Midian.  
Out of evil Avith Hadad brought his Baal,  
Kos the vile, to trample all our shepherd lands.

Then we prayed in torment; and Jehovah heard us!  
Hadad died in madness; feeble Samlah followed.  
Battle trumpets rallied all the Kenite warriors,  
And Jehovah led us with his sword of fire!

Twenty thousand bowmen marched before our army;  
Thirty thousand spearmen followed with the slingers.  
And we fell on Samlah in the land of Moab,  
Fifty thousand battling with his hundred thousands!

Where we stood was cloudless; but the rain slashed  
downward  
Till the Edomite archers, bowstrings wet, were routed.  
But the Edomite spearmen sought to overflow us,  
Kos and feeble Samlah riding in their midst.

Then the sword from heaven left its cloudy scabbard,  
Thundering in triumph as it smote and slew;  
Smote the god, and hurled him, shattered and burned,  
to earth;  
Smote the king, and hurled him, scorched and charred,  
to death!

## *JEHOVAH*

All the sons of Edom turned and fled in tumult,  
Leaving Kos in ashes, leaving Samlah dead.  
Thus the sword of fire goes before our army,  
Thus its foes are routed by the lightning's blade!

Children of Jehovah, let your shouts of triumph  
Cleave the hills asunder, split the shining heavens!  
For Jehovah's sword waits in its cloudy scabbard  
To burn our foes, and fling them as ashes into the wind!

### 6

"That is our god: this is his sword," said Uz,  
"An ancient iron remembrance to Jehovah  
Of what he bore, before that vacant day  
When clouds masked Sinai, and he rose to heaven,  
His second home. Your swords have wasted Edom,  
As his did once. But Jehovah, lord of shepherds  
And tempests, watches us, never sleeping.  
This, then, is our answer to your demands—"

Joab

Leant close, Benaiah and all the others listened  
With ears intent.

Uz spoke a last word to Jether,  
Who passed it round; the Kenites bowed agreement.  
"Tell to King David that we serve Jehovah,  
And have from his beginning. Tell him further  
Jehovah's servants serve a lord of justice  
And brotherhood to their brothers; they need not bow  
Beneath a brother's ox-yoke; and by the covenant  
Of Sinai we are his brothers. This is our answer."

## VI. THE BLOOD DOOM

### 1

Upon the northern road the silken dust,  
So thick it clutched the tops of the horses' hoofs,  
Lay undisturbed. Joab looked back at last,  
And answered them: "You say you serve Jehovah:  
King David is his anointed servant, and those  
Who serve the master, bow to his steward. You speak  
Of covenants of brotherhood; the word  
Of David I promise later on that matter.  
But as to brotherhood, keep the main road,  
Lest you be bogged in errors. You have a god,  
You say, whose name is the same indeed as ours—  
The selfsame god, by covenant, you say.  
You say that this god slew a behemoth,  
Poached a brisk harlot out of merry Tyre,  
Smote Edom, killed venison, and I know not what.  
These things may be, or not. We stuff the noses  
Of ailing sheep with whittled twigs of John wood,  
That they may sneeze, and shake off maggots and lice.  
Now we shall stuff the word of truth between us,  
That all lies may be cast. I am no singer,  
But one song I remember—Joshua's song,  
Sung by the leader who came after Moses,  
Sung as the flames of Ai, that proud walled city,

## ***JEHOVAH***

Made merry with the clouds. Heed you this song,—”  
And Joab’s voice was like a scarf of Nineveh  
For softness,—“ for it holds lessons of the brotherhood  
Jehovah loves.

“ Death is brother to life,  
Doom is brother to sin;  
Storm is brother to stillness,  
Blood is brother to pride.

“ Grief is brother to joy,  
Worm is brother to man;  
Spear is brother to belly,  
Sword is brother to skull!

“ Baal is brother to slaughter,  
Israel brother to Israel—”

The hot words ceased. “ And now for Joshua’s song.”

## 2

### *The Way Opens*

Up Nebo’s high summit one climbed in the daybreak;  
From Nebo’s lone crest none returned to the people.  
Thus Moses, beloved of Jehovah, has journeyed  
Again to his fathers—and none saw his going.

Jehovah was still with his children, O people!  
His word came to me in the whispering midnight,

## *THE BLOOD DOOM*

To Joshua-ben-Nun, the least of his servants,  
A word bright with glory, a word red with triumph!

“Go up to the land which Jehovah has promised—  
Your bounds are the northernmost hills of the Hittites,  
The great sea that lies toward the sun’s downward  
going,  
And turbid Euphrates, the river of rivers!

“All this you shall conquer with swordmen and spear-men:

The spear and the sword shall not cease from their labor,  
Nor spare man nor woman nor child in their killing,  
Till all things that breathe you have slain for my glory!”

We marched in our might to the waters of Jordan,  
With swords clean and thirsty, with spears bright and  
hungry.

Before us lay Jericho, city of palm trees,  
Asleep with its treasurers, and dead to its danger!

Jehovah once parted the sea’s foaming waters,  
To save us, and drown Egypt’s horsemen and chariots:  
And now his hand parted the rain-swollen Jordan,  
Until we had crossed, to the uttermost tribesman!

We shall not forget what he did—for we built him  
An altar, a stone for each tribe, on the stream’s rim.  
Before us lay Jericho, asleep with its treasures,  
And dead to its danger—and our swords were thirsty!

## **JEHOVAH**

### 3

#### *The Necks of Kings*

Now tremble, men of Jericho!  
Jehovah's hand is heaviest  
When kings offend his high decrees!

King Sihon of the Amorites,  
King Og of Bashan, where are they?  
Their bones are picked—their lands are picked!

Jehovah's hand is heavy on kings!  
Did not five kings of the Amorites  
Conspire against Gibeon and Israel?

The kings of Jerusalem and Hebron,  
The kings of Jarmuth, Lachish, Eglon,—  
But we crept up all night from Gilgal,

And fell upon them like the lightning  
Splitting a mountain fir; all day  
We slew them; and the Lord flung stones

Of hail out of the storming heaven,  
And slaughtered them by scores of thousands!  
The night came close; and, to my prayer,

¶

Jehovah froze the very sun  
Stiff on the wall of heaven, and held  
The moon motionless in the sky,

## *THE BLOOD DOOM*

Until our bloody slaying was ended!  
And these five kings,—I placed their necks  
Flat on the ground—then all my fighters

Set their feet on the necks of kings.  
So lie all enemies of the Lord!  
And then I hanged them till they died.

Now tremble, men of Jericho!  
Jehovah's hand is heaviest  
When proud walled cities defy his will,

When kings in crimson flout his word;  
Now yield your walls, your selves, your hearts,  
Or meet Jehovah's crimson doom!

### 4

#### *The Shining Man*

Who shines in the dawn with the morning-star's brightness,  
This tall lonely warrior, between us and Jericho?  
“Now say are you for us, great sir, or our foemen?”  
“I captain the hosts of Jehovah,” he answered.

I fell on my face, my eyes blind at his splendor. . . .  
“Jehovah has given you Jericho! City  
And king, and the mighty men—all are for Israel!  
And this is the way that Jehovah shall crush them:

## *JEHOVAH*

"Let all of your armed men march once round the walls  
Each day for six days, with the ark borne amid them,  
And seven priests leading with trumpets, whose blowing  
Shall cease not at all—while the people keep silence.

"The seventh day, seven full circuits—then quickly  
The priests blow, the people break silence by shouting;  
And lo, at the shouting, the proud walls shall crumble,  
And thus will he give you the city—to ravage!

"Spare Rahab the harlot, who hid your two spies;  
But all of the rest is accursed! None that breathe  
Must breathe when you finish,—no stone on another!  
Let Jericho perish forever—forever!"

He ceased from his speaking. We marched at his  
bidding,  
Once round for six days, seven times on the seventh,  
The ark in the midst, and the priests' trumpets blow-  
ing,—  
And I gave the word to the whole people: "Shout!"

### 5

#### *The Sowing with Salt*

They shouted—the walls fell! The mortar  
Melted and flowed, the eternal stones  
Shattered, as if the shameer worm,

The hewer of stones, had channeled them!  
What had been walls and iron-barred gates  
Was now ten thousand yawning roadways!

## *THE BLOOD DOOM*

The clean swords drank till they were tipsy  
With slaying; the hungry spears gorged on.  
All men and women, young and old,—

Hobbling old men and romping youths,  
Women whose infants mouthed their breasts,  
And women ripe with child,—and ox,

And sheep, and horse, and ass, were butchered,  
All things that breathed. The gold and silver,  
Iron and brass, were saved for Jehovah—

Such was his will. The harlot Rahab  
Was spared. And then a fire was lit,  
With Jericho as its lordly fuel!

Pile on the chairs, the beds, the throne!  
Fling on the curtains, silks, and rich stuffs!  
Let the sweet savor of the burning

Climb to the nostrils of Jehovah!  
Women and children and bloodied men  
Dance round the fringes of the fire!

Lo, we have made of Jericho  
A rich burnt offering to the Lord,  
A fiery sacrifice to Jehovah!

When the last heated stone was cold,  
And the wind flung abroad the ashes,  
We took our plows and furrowed the land

## ***JEHOVAH***

And sowed a crop—lest any forget!  
Seeds of salt we sowed in the furrows,  
That no green thing might ever wake

Where sinful Jericho once had been!  
Blood and death, and a barren soil,  
These are the red doom of Jehovah!

### **6**

#### *The Curse*

The curse of Jehovah on him who rebuilds  
The city of Jericho! Loss of his first-born  
Shall bind the foundations—the death of his youngest  
Shall mortar the gates and the towering walls!

Spread on into Canaan! Jehovah before us,  
The sword of his wrath as a scourge to our foemen,  
What land or what sea, but his sons shall possess it?  
What city of scorners our swords shall not lesson?

Spread on into Canaan! Jehovah has promised  
All lands to his children. For those who defy him,  
A sword for a mate, and the dust for a bride!  
Spread on into Canaan—thence over the world!

### **7**

The children of Israel raised a volleying shout,  
“Great is Jehovah, mighty King David, and mighty  
Joab, the chief of his hosts!”

## *THE BLOOD DOOM*

He smiled at their tumult,  
Unbending slightly; for praise is as sweet to the great  
As to the humble.

Jether at last came forth,  
Stepping a spear's length toward the seat of Joab,  
Shaking his shaggy mane of hair, a scarred  
Crag of a man, broader of shoulder than Joab.  
His either weighty arm could hurl a boulder  
A hundred cubits, killing as it struck.  
He spoke: "You sing a lion-god's full slaying.  
Jehovah, god of Sinai, god of tempests,  
God of the shepherd tribes, of ours, of yours,  
Has death within his quiver, when he draws  
His lightning-arrows forth, to slay his foemen.  
But would Jehovah tell his children to slaughter  
All peoples everywhere? Is it in reason?  
What good could distant lands be to your tribesmen?  
Canaan, you say, is rich in herbage; then why  
Seek further fields? Your sheep would die on the  
journey,  
Your flocks diminish. . . . It is well to smite  
The walled towns which assail us shepherd folk,—  
But would Jehovah have you live in them,  
To bow to the Baal-abominations there,  
To leave his open hills, his roofing stars  
On halls carpeted with the green of summer,  
For all a city's squeezing walls and rooms?  
Did your chief Joshua consult Jehovah,  
And have you heard aright the word of the god?"

## VII. THE MARCHING OF THE GIANTS

### 1

Upon the northern road the silken dust,  
So thick it clutched the spokes of the chariot wheels,  
Lay undisturbed. Even while Jether spoke,  
Answering, questioning, Joab's eyes twitched back  
From the Kenite's scar-grooved face, to travel the road  
And knock at the horizon-gate for a movement,  
A stir, upon it. Cushite legs were strong;  
Word should have come. . . .

He turned, eyes left the road,  
Ears brought him back to the council. A new voice  
Rumbled in answer to the shepherd warrior—  
Benaiah, son of Jehoiada. He was one  
Who had small love for Joab. Few love a tool,  
Pliant to bend to any use; tho all  
Might fear his power, who had dared to murder Abner,  
Beloved of Israel, the uncle of Saul, and the leader  
Of all his hosts,—murder him, too, when David  
Had taken him to his bosom. So Israel hated  
And shrank from Joab. Benaiah feared him not,  
Nor anything. He had slain the two fierce sons  
Of Ariel of Moab; he slew a lion  
Barehanded, in a pit, on a snowy day;

## *THE MARCHING OF THE GIANTS*

He killed an Egyptian giant five cubits tall,  
With the man's own beamlike spear. What should he  
fear—

Almost a giant himself, as huge as Jether. . . .

And all men loved him for his gentleness.

In the palace of King David, the king's small sons,  
Shobab and Solomon, would ride his shoulders,  
Parting his beard for reins,—so kindly he was.

It was Benaiah's rumble that Joab heard.

“But Jehovah dwells on Zion, in Jerusalem.

He dwells in a city—”

“ Sinai is no city!

Your Moses met him there—your prophets seek him  
Beyond the lonely desert, on the mount's crest!”

Benaiah tried again. “These distant lands  
Are not for grazing sheep; the sons of Israel  
War against those who do not serve Jehovah,  
To bring the scoffer and scorner under his sway,  
Take of his spoil for the temple, receive his tribute,  
That Jehovah's name may be sweet in all the lands.”

“He is God of our tribe—and yours; and not  
A god of city dunghills!”

“He is the god,”

Suave Joab broke in, quicker with his tongue  
Than Benaiah, “—of all the lands that he has con-  
quered;

## *JEHOVAH*

Canaan, Moab and Ammon, Amelek,  
Edom, Syria, Gath—of all the lands  
He promised Joshua,—from the sea to the river,  
From the Hittite mountains to the southernmost hill.”

“And who will watch your sheep when you walk these  
lands?”

Jether’s bewildered mind still groped.

Benaiah

Gestured slowly to Joab: “No, you have spoken.  
It is Jehovah’s will that we, his children,  
Shall never sleep within our beds, till all  
Accursed races have been driven hence  
To their destruction. I shall sing his battle  
Against the Anakim, the hateful brood  
Of giants, who strove against his will,—to show  
How Lord Jehovah opens the roads of earth  
Before the firstlings of his hand and heart.”

## 2

### *The Sons of Anak March*

All the giants of old are gone: Arba dead and rotted;  
Og was slain by Moses’ hand, Anak yields to worms;  
Sheshai, Talmai, Ahiman, Judah’s Caleb slew them—  
And Goliath, scourge of Gath, fell to David’s sling!

Anakim from Hebron,  
Giants great and stately;

## *THE MARCHING OF THE GIANTS*

Emin out of Moab,  
Giants gross and mad;  
Zam-zummim out of Ammon,  
Giants vast and valiant;  
Avvim out of Gaza,  
Huge as Og of Bashan!

But Jehovah smote them,  
Harried them, destroyed them—  
Lopped them off like cedars  
Sawyers have beheaded. . . .  
Slaughtered are the Avvim,  
Emin, Zam-zummim,  
Anakim,—the giants  
Now are hills of dust.

What are these that march like behemoths before the army  
Of the murderous Philistine, swarming up from Gath?  
Four great forms, like striding pillars, clad in brazen helmets,  
Coats of mail, and swords of iron, new and terrible!

We have slain the giant of Gath, but his sons are marching—  
Ishbi-benob, Saph, and Lahmi—and the Unnamed One.  
We have slain Goliath, but his brothers are upon us.  
David, dare we face such foes? Death is marching near!

## *JEHOVAH*

Ishbi-benob—by his side what are we but grasshoppers?  
Saph—can man assail a giant whose towers tear the sky?  
Lahmi—he is horrible as the jaws of Moloch.  
The Unnamed Six-fingered One—tallest of them all—

Lo, they will devour us! None can stand before them!  
They will sweep us forth, as ants scattered by a broom.  
Woe has come to Israel! Four great giants are marching.

Can Jehovah save from these? David, shall we flee?

### 3

#### *Youth Passes*

“With a sling and pebble in my hand I met Goliath—  
And Jehovah drove the stone clear into his skull.  
Shall we flee from fly-blown, swollen sons of the  
Philistines?  
Stone and arrow, spear and sword—death to the giants  
of Gath!”

In the days forgotten,  
Sons of the gods—of Baal,  
Milcolm, Chemosh, Dagon,  
Looking on men’s daughters,  
Found them fair—and captured  
Wives from them; their children  
Were the giants—Arba,  
Anak, Og, Goliath. . . .

## *THE MARCHING OF THE GIANTS*

But Jehovah smote them:  
Withered Arba and Anak;  
Three were slain by Caleb,  
David felled Goliath.  
Emim and Zam-zummim,  
Avvim,—all the giants  
Hills of whitened bones!  
. . . All, but four in Gath!

King David lifted up his sword, the sword of slain Goliath,  
And struck on Ishbi-benob's shield—the strokes were brazen thunder.  
His captains thronged around the towering knees of Saph and Lahmi,  
And the huge Unnamed Six-fingered One—their strokes were brazen rain!

Mere grasshoppers their size—but black and thick they crowded on them,  
As pelting wind-lashed waves that pound a boat until it breaks.  
The armed men closed rejoicing on the Philistines, and the foemen  
Met them as gayly,—the battle-blows pattered like brazen hail!

Each blow of Ishbi-benob was as if a wall struck David;  
With slain Goliath's sword the king poured at him blow on blow.

## *JEHOVAH*

One sliced a golden, sunbright lock from off the giant's forehead,  
Golden as David's hair, before slow age had frozen it gray.

The giant roared in fury, lifted his sword, and swung it round him,  
A halo of glitter and menace, out of which the long blade leapt.  
King David stepped aside, and lifted to swing his sword in answer.  
And then . . . a twinge in his right arm—he stopped the sword midway—

Then David suddenly knew he was old: worn arm that balked at his bidding,  
Hair gray. . . . Before him youth, lusty, enflamed. . . . His vigor fled,  
A great blow beat him down to his knees—the army watched in horror  
As Ishbi-benob raised his sword, to slay the anointed king!

## 4

### *The Hills Brought Low*

The iron sword of the giant poised, to gloat at its coming triumph,—  
The king, wilted and faint, held his dazed eyes on the falling blade,—

## *THE MARCHING OF THE GIANTS*

A low moan shook the Israelites, dumb at the desecration,—

Would David perish so? . . . The blow thundered—  
metal on metal—

The blade of Ishbi-benob crashed upon the sword of  
Abishai,

Old as the king, yet a laughing man—and laughter  
banishes age.

Swift to the aid of the king he sprang,—and David  
crawled to safety,

While this new champion of Jehovah faced the giant's  
wrath.

Long Jehovah fought them—  
Anakim from Hebron,  
Emim out of Moab,  
Avvim bred in Gath,  
Zam-zummim clear from Ammon,  
Giants gross and mighty,  
Moving hills of evil  
Striving with the lord!

Yet their bones are broken,  
And their sons are slaughtered:  
Arba, Og, and Anak,  
Three that fell to Caleb,  
Great Goliath conquered. . . .  
Yea, and Ishbi-benob,  
Lahmi, Saph, Unnamed One,  
Jehovah, split their skulls!

## *JEHOVAH*

Abishai laughed, and struck at his head, and bent the  
shining helmet.

Abishai laughed, and drove at his heart, denting the  
brazen shield.

Abishai laughed, and whirled to his right,—twisting  
the giant's sword from him,

Then pierced him in the side—and watched him topple  
to his knees,

Slowly and falteringly, as a tree cut by the ax of a  
woodman,

Quivering doubtfully, then with a rush wheels its bulk  
to the ground.

So fell Ishbi-benob, by the sword and the laugh of  
Abishai,—

While panic broke like wind-lashed surf over the  
foemen's hearts.

Lahmi stood frozen at Ishbi-benob's muttered cry, and  
his falling;

David's armed men hacked his knees, then hewed his  
fallen throat.

Saph grew pallid, and turned in flight—and the spears  
of David's captains

Grew in his back like hedgehog quills—he writhed on  
his face in death.

And the vast Unnamed One, alone where three had  
stood beside him,

Fell, as an arrow halved his neck, a hill of shivering  
death!

## *THE MARCHING OF THE GIANTS*

All the Philistines fled like tumbling leaves before a tempest,  
While Israel kept to its slaughtering till the last foe was dead.

Gifts for Lord Jehovah!  
Eight huge thumbs to please him,  
Eight great toes as tokens  
Of the fallen giants!  
Ishbi-benob, what is he?  
Lahmi, Saph, Unnamed One,  
Thumbs and great toes only  
At Jehovah's feet!

### 5

Abishai laughed,—the Kenites marveled to hear  
The laugh that had slain a giant. “I should have sung  
That song, Benaiah! I’d have given you  
At least two roarers to slay, not bound you down  
To a puny one!” His laughter shook again,  
Warming the heart.

“You need no breath-blown fame,  
Savior of David! And I sang not for you,  
But to show how Jehovah sheds no sinless blood,—  
Only the evil giants, and wicked peoples,  
Abominations, hateful in his sight!  
He is no madman god, recklessly spitting  
All men on one blade. We fight only his foemen,

## ***JEHOVAH***

To clear the lands of them, and mark his name  
On the four pillars that hold up the sky."

Jether the Kenite spoke to him again,  
His moon face blank with uncertainty. "But how  
Can Jehovah, god of Sinai, dwell in Zion?  
All lands have gods . . . ours dwells in the mount he  
chose.

It is one thing to travel,—another to move,  
Tents, flocks, and household goods, to a far country.  
He cannot dwell in a dozen cities at once,—  
Much less in all the sheeptrails of the earth.  
The covenant that Moses made with Jehovah  
Bound you to worship him in his own way.  
Why have you made of him a vagrant thing,  
Borne from his home to lost and forgotten cities?"

## VIII. SEVEN DAYS

### 1

Upon the northern road the silken dust,  
So thick it clutched above men's marching ankles,  
Lay undisturbed. But Joab's soul writhed restlessly,  
Marking the vacancy hovering over the way  
That led to the king. . . . Should he send a guarded  
runner?

There might be marauding bands hid in the hills,  
Clawing at lonely men. . . . Perhaps the king  
Himself was uncertain; or gone from the Mount of  
Zion

Upon a journey. . . . He could act himself,  
Slaying or sparing,—maybe best, after all;  
Abner's death had been so. Eyes sought the road;  
No answer there.

One keen ear, turned toward Jether,  
Marked his long query. Joab opened a palm  
Toward the recorder. "Answer, Jehoshaphat:  
Wisdom is in you."

The lean recorder rose,  
His face a butcher's cleaver, yellowed and pocked,—  
But not with age; dark valleys under the eyes,

## *JEHOVAH*

From poring over parchments; skin hanging in pouches;—

And ever a sensitive sneer, almost a smirk,  
A ready defense should men mock at his wisdom,  
Wavered across the cheeks,—humble to greatness,  
Austere when humbler men addressed him. And now,  
A leaf dried in young summer, he stood out  
Before the Kenites, weighing them curiously.

“You query how Jehovah, who is indigenous  
To Sinai-Horeb, can be at once the god  
Of a dozen scattered municipalities.

The writings of the law hold answer for you:  
A man, by law, is ruler of what he makes.  
The smith fashions a plow, the carpenter  
Constructs a chair—each belongs to its maker.  
Just so the cities that roughen the even plain  
All are Jehovah’s—for he made them all.”

## 2

Groping bewilderment clouded Jether’s face  
And thickened his tongue. But Uz broke into question,  
Suddenly, sharply. “What is this that you say?  
Jehovah made the cities? Made the earth?”  
He stopped, uncertainly.

### *Jehosaphat*

Dampened his thin lips, with a thin dry pleasure  
In ignorance that daised him as teacher.  
His head bobbed solemnly up and down; his lips

## SEVEN DAYS

Puckered in satisfaction. Then he answered:  
“So speaks the law. Jehovah, we are taught,  
In the beginning created the heaven and the earth,  
A dark and watery waste; on this he moved  
Stumblingly. ‘Let there be light!’ he cried,  
And split it from the dark—so Day and Night.

This was the first day.

“Jehovah parted the solid mass of waters  
With a firmament—the heavens; gathering the flood  
Above, stored up for rain, and below, the sea.

This was the second day.

“Then his hand dried the waters into one place,  
Till the firm land appeared; and he made grass,  
And herb, and tree, robing the lands with green.

This was the third day.

“He hung up lights across the darkened heaven,  
Bright dust of stars, a silver moon—all forged  
At his anvil; where he heated, for the day,  
A golden sun, to warm and brighten the lands—

This was the fourth day.

“Jehovah caused the waters and sky to give birth  
To moving creatures: fish and deep-sea monsters,  
And all the winged fowl that live in air.

This was the fifth day.

“Then at his word the earth travailed, and bore  
Cattle and beast and creeping thing—last, man,

## *JEHOVAH*

Male and female, made in Jehovah's image,—  
To have dominion over fish and fowl,  
Over beast, and cattle, and creeping thing—forever!  
This was the sixth day.

“Heaven and earth were done, and the host of the stars—  
So on the seventh day Jehovah rested,  
Blessing the day as his own day forever.  
This was the seventh day.

“So speaks the law.”

### 3

Uz straightened his crumpled face, his claw-hand pointing  
Javelin-like at Jehoshaphat, his eyes  
Scorching blackly toward the recorder, while anger  
Shivered in each taut syllable he spoke:  
“Surely a devil dwells within this law!  
Can men credit such madness? You say Jehovah,  
Our god, your god by covenant with Moses,  
A hunter of our tribe, grandfather's father  
To Jethro—storming ruler of Sinai—you say  
That this Jehovah made the earth and the heaven,  
The water, the land, the lizard, the starry candles,  
Sheep, wolf, and man,—and all the rest you named?  
He made them? He was born in the rich valley  
Opening toward Midian,—wandered those lands we  
wander,

## *SEVEN DAYS*

Before he chose his hill, and conquered its god.  
You say he made the hill he had to conquer?  
You say, made all the earth—made even the valley  
In which he was born? The valley, the camp, the tent  
Where his mother shook with anguish, and brought him  
forth,  
Held in the midwife's hand—a tiny suckling,  
Smaller and weaker than a calf? He made the world?"

Uz locked his arms together, and waited an answer.

### 4

Jehoshaphat was ready with his response.  
"Yes. . . . Jehovah, who led us out of Egypt,  
Promised us Canaan and other blossoming lands,  
And goes before our ever-conquering army,—  
He made the earth, the heaven—and you, and me."

Uz came at him again. "Suppose that I  
Came to you here in this camp, and told you: 'Know  
That I, who stand before you, made that camel  
Munching his straw, and made the straw he munches—  
Made, too, the ground he stands on, and all ground,  
The earth, the turquoise sky, those driven clouds,  
I made them all! I made your army, too,  
Each man of it, and your walled city Jerusalem,  
All cities and all seas—in six short days  
I made them!' If I said these words to you,  
Would you not seek a wise man, to drive out

## *JEHOVAH*

The demon within me?" His voice grew heavy with meaning.

"And if Jehovah, born within our tents,  
Known there as youth and warrior, no matter how swollen

With pride at his great ventures, had come up  
To any within the tribe, or out of it,  
And puffed out such a tale, they must have called him  
Either a liar, or a demon-ridden man.

He told no lies—he was too strong to need them.

He did not spill a vapor of boastful words,  
Covetous of marvels he had not done. Why then  
This law that says Jehovah made the earth  
And heaven,—who walked them, in men's memory?"

The sneer, so near a smirk, upon the cheeks  
Of the recorder, grooved a trifle deeper.

"Who made the earth, O ancient man of wisdom?  
And who lifted the heaven?"

### *The look of Uz*

Traveled a great way off, and waited there.

"They are here; is not that enough for man?

Some say they grew like herbs. . . . My years are many,

My youth has known far older men than I,  
But none who knew this thing. I do not know.  
Nor shall man learn, however much he ponder,  
However much he dream. But I do know  
That Sinai's god and Jethro's warrior-father,  
Jehovah, had no finger in the making!"

## *SEVEN DAYS*

### 5

Up the long level of the northern road,  
Floored with its silken dust, Joab's tense eyes  
Had strained themselves, seeking from barren soil  
A harvest of movement. While Jehoshaphat  
Sang of the forging of sun and moon, the eyes  
Blinked wide in disbelief, at a sudden blur  
Where the road met the horizon—a dusty trifle  
That grew with the bitter talk, until he saw  
It was a group of men, not his single runner,  
Stirring the drowsy dust. There was the sparkle  
Of armor, and live colors. His heart dragged low;  
This was not the Cushite. . . . There were other ways  
Than waiting a lost key, when a door was locked. . . .

But Joab took no chances. He sent Abishai  
To learn who were moving southward. Then he turned  
His mind again to the talk; but ever it stole  
Back to the peopled road.

At last his brother  
Tiptoed beside, with the unbelievable word:  
“You had better come. Your Cushite runner returns,  
Bringing Zadok, David's priest,—while the other,  
The priest Abiathar, remains with the king.”

Joab showered his greetings upon Zadok,—  
Joy at the filled need driving off his glumness,—  
And on his men, who brought the golden ephod,

## *JEHOVAH*

Forged of the rings and earrings of slaughtered foemen,  
Its weight two thousand and forty shekels of gold—  
And the sacred Urim and Thummim, two secret  
stones  
By which the god could speak. He turned to the  
Cushite:  
“Your story.”

“Soon as I entered Judah, I learned  
The anointed king had traveled south to Hebron.  
I found him there. He sent a word for your ear,  
Concerning what you asked; but most he sent  
His priest, Zadok, with the ephod wrought of gold,  
That the word of the Lord Jehovah might be had  
On all perplexing questions.” Then he came closer,  
And whispered briskly to his chief; and all  
Went out to the noisy council.

The talking calmed  
As the great lord of the hosts came forth, beside him  
The plump, benignant priest, his ample fingers  
Wreathed peacefully on the embroidered girdle  
That based the sacred breastplate. His face stayed  
stone,  
Altho he missed no spurt of the murmur that buzzed  
In the Kenite ranks; his round face held the meekness  
Of sleek and well-fed things.

The warrior spoke:  
“Let us lay by this banquet of erudition  
That our recorder and your old envoy furnish.

## **SEVEN DAYS**

Theirs is a weighty dispute, to be carried on  
By the altar at Jerusalem—some slow season.  
But I have matters of moment, that shove aside  
Such ancient queries.” He turned his words at Uz:  
“Your tribe, from the plains that edge the southern  
mountains,  
Sent you to learn of David’s will,—alarmed  
By news of what his and Jehovah’s army  
Did to your border peoples. I gave you answer,  
Demanding you serve Jehovah, and bow beneath  
The ox-yoke of the king. You answered me,  
Claiming you worshiped our god, tho not our king.  
I have sought David’s word on this, and have it:  
Listen to the saying of the Lord’s anointed!”

## IX. THE KING'S WORD

### 1

The two score Kenite envoys, heads of families,  
Drew closer to Uz, their leader—an age-burnt coal,  
Yet storing an inexhaustible flame within  
His heart. If there was word of doom, together  
Men could receive it better; if word for joy,  
Why cuddle it to a lonely bosom?

#### First Joab

Conferred aside with Jehoshaphat, and then  
Continued. “David, son of Jesse, the king  
Of Judah and Israel, the conqueror  
Of countless lands, and the anointed of God,  
Sends word to the envoys out of that small tribe,  
The Kenites, who graze their flocks and herds beneath  
Mount Sinai, and in the hollows south of the desert.”  
A sneer crept out of its hiding, onto his face.  
“King David finds it strange that you should set  
Yourselves in the way of his armies, to waste their  
time  
In lengthy parley, when you are a tribe  
Neither large in number, nor blessed with wealth of  
flocks  
Nor cattle, much less gold and precious goods

## THE KING'S WORD

Which other nations boast. Since you are so slight  
In men of war and possessions, he bids you hush  
Your speech to that fitting so slight a people."

The Kenites, who had looked at least for courtesy,  
Flushed hot at the measured slur. Restless hands  
Fidgeted with daggers nested beneath their cloaks,  
Hearts heated, waves of alternate warmth  
And chill pricked them. Their raw looks were cast  
At Joab. But no flush lit Uz's cheek.  
Instead, he stood off quietly, studying Joab,  
Neither shame nor anger in him, only a wonder  
At what skulked behind the insult.

### Jether

Stepped suddenly out to speak. The old man woke,  
Caught hold of his arm, commanded in whispers, and  
then  
Pleaded desperately, but wordlessly,  
To alter his course. The face of Jether was hard  
As hill rock; he could not even hear Uz speak,  
So great was his angry shame. Sharply he said:  
"The eyes of the king are clear, but cannot travel  
Desert and valley, nor climb sky-nudging hills.  
The Kenites are a mighty tribe; our men  
Of war are numbered ten thousand and four hundred.  
There is no key when they lock our mountain passes.  
Our flocks are like the drops of the rain for number,  
Our cattle crowd the valleys: there are no such flocks  
And herds as ours for number. Such are the Kenites."  
Jether swaggered back.

## ***JEHOVAH***

Old Uz looked thru him,  
And quietly said, "Small things can hide in small  
holes."

### **2**

The smile on Joab's face was less a smile  
Than a hidden mock of the smile of an honest man.  
"You have those facts, recorder? You have the num-  
bers

Of men and flocks and herds? . . . Heed, you Kenites,  
The words of David." His face grew straight again,  
Flint-like and fearful. "It is not enough that man  
Worship Jehovah his own way; if all men  
Did this, there could be no tabernacle,  
There could be no temple, such as the king will build. . .  
Jehovah dwells in Zion: the anointed king  
Saw him there, in a vision. He dwells on Sinai;  
He has pitched his tents high above Ascelon,  
He has built him a mansion over Ammon and Moab,  
And over all lands conquered in his name.  
He has given his word that all the lands of earth  
Shall kneel before his throne, all mountains bow down,  
All seas humble themselves to do him honor.  
No city of the plain may flout his name,  
No farthest sheeptrail fail to do him reverence.  
He made all lands, and gives them to his children,  
The twelve of Israel, to exalt his name.  
So shall the conquered earth accept his yoke,  
That he may exult in his terrible beauty and power!  
Jehovah, the god of battles, the lord of the hosts

## *THE KING'S WORD*

Of the stars—Know he is God, and David king!”  
And now persuasion curved his voice. “You are  
A mighty tribe, you tell us, mighty and wealthy. . . .  
If you accept Jehovah as your god,  
And David as your king, you will find his yoke  
Is light as foam circling a whirlpool. You are  
To pay as tribute to David, out of this wealth,  
Yearly, ten talents of gold, a thousand sheep  
And half a thousand heifers, all without blemish.  
Accept these terms,—and they are mild, I tell you,  
O Kenites, as a friend to you and all men:  
Mild, when compared to what King David offered  
To your border tribes; nothing, when matched with  
what  
They took, as I have sung,—accept these terms,  
And you return in peace to your own sheepfolds,  
And dwell forever under Jehovah’s arm—”

“Where we have always dwelt,” Uz broke in softly.

“I have spoken.”

“If we refuse these gentle terms,  
This trifling yearly gift to the king,—or the god,  
In whose behalf the king is so zealous?”

The warrior  
Took out his sword from the scabbard, and held it high,  
Sliding a loving finger down the bright edge.  
“Clean,” he said. “So are the lands of the enemies  
Of Jehovah, when his armies pass out of them.

## ***JEHOVAH***

I need not say all we must do; yet some  
You should be told. The word of Jehovah is,  
The tribe that will not obey is to be hunted  
And harried to the rim of the earth. All males  
Who can bear the sword, shall bear it in their bellies:  
None will be spared. The old men too shall perish,  
The youth be sold in other lands, as eunuchs }  
To serve forever; and no more seed of the loins  
Of the Kenites shall dwell on earth. And of your  
women,  
Those who have known men shall now know the sword;  
Those who are virgins, be shared as slaves among us.  
So shall Jehovah blot out the name of those  
Who do not heed his statutes. This is his word."

### **3**

The Kenites stood with unchanged faces, while  
The bloody words marched forth. Then quietly Uz  
Walked out again, taking the sword of Jehovah  
Out of its litter, that ancient giant's weapon  
Eight full spans long. This time he did not stoop,  
Stepping somehow erect. He took a place  
Near Joab, his words coming with terrible softness:  
"By this sword, which once Jehovah wielded,  
By his name, who was a tribesman with us,  
By his mount, where still he dwells in tempest,  
By himself, our god from his beginning,  
I put a question to you." He stopped, then spoke:  
"We serve Jehovah, and no threats could drive us  
To serve another god. . . . We have no king;

## THE KING'S WORD

It is not Jehovah's will. We will serve no king,  
For he has forbidden it. Your own law tells  
How Moses made this covenant with our Jehovah,  
Who, then and now, was, and is—our god.  
You say in Jehovah's name you will march against us.  
Answer this question, as Jehovah bids you:  
Can Jehovah march against Jehovah?  
Can Jehovah fight Jehovah? Can he slay himself?  
On this—as servants of our god—we stand."

### 4

All stared at Joab's face, to see what change  
These words would make; but nothing crept without.  
He seemed to ponder. Then at last words woke:  
"This question is for Jehovah's self to solve.  
King David has sent Zadok, his priest, to us,  
Bearing the king's own ephod of wrought gold,  
Forged of the rings and earrings of slaughtered foemen,  
Its weight two thousand and forty shekels of gold.  
To-morrow he shall consult the god upon this.  
Night slips again among us; the fires glow out  
In the tent-field spread below, faster than they  
Are lighted in the starry camp of heaven.  
Now let us sleep, and lay all cloudy questions  
Before the god."

He called Abishai to him,  
And shared a few sharp secret words. At once  
He raised his voice. "King David is at Hebron;  
March back to-night, leading the half of the army.

## ***JEHOVAH***

Take all your chiefs, but leave Benaiah with me.”  
Quietly he passed into his tent.

### **5**

#### **Abishai**

Stood on the northward slope, above the road,  
Watching the clanking files of dusky figures  
Flowing out of the orange haze of the campfires  
Into more dusk. One by one the thousands  
Tallied and passed—all northward. Yet his heart  
Joyed not at the healthy tread of the full ranks.  
Why had not God made his heart such as Joab’s,  
If he must do Joab’s planning? . . . Northward four  
miles,  
Then swiftly round to the southern valley, where  
The camp of the Kenites lay, trusting the truce  
Their envoys had made with Joab. . . . This was war,  
And David and Jehovah did not lose. He wrapped  
His thick cloak tighter, banishing night’s chilliness,  
And joined his captains, marching, marching northward.

Over the darkening ashes of the tent-fires  
A round moon mounted, like a silver target  
Pushed up the gray wall of the sky. Around it  
A pallid halo dragged, vast as a sea—  
And farther, farther yet, an echoing ring  
Of light glimmered fitfully. The sentries,  
Yawning, pounded the sandy uncertainty  
Of the roads between the tents, wondering drowsily  
What menace of heavy woe hung in that moon.

## ***THE KING'S WORD***

And the white light crept into the tents, so that men  
Tossed uneasily in their sleep; and visions  
And troubled dreams peopled the silent ways.  
Old Uz dreamed of a valley peaceful and green;  
But the color of the dream of Joab was red as blood.

## X. THE DREAM OF ZADOK

### 1

Thru the brisk gloom of the dawn-hour Joab sought  
The tent of the priest. After the greeting, he sent  
The attendants off, and spoke alone with Zadok.  
“You have heard something of what these desert dogs  
Bay at us; and you have talked with David. What  
Will Jehovah say to this plea, of a god  
Warring against himself? And how should I question?”

Zadok’s face was smooth, tho he carried no love  
For the man or maid who stayed him from his breakfast.  
Then, too, Joab was sliding soil—death  
To those on whom it fell, and uncertain footing  
For careless walking. He was too close to Abiathar,  
The other priest; tho this did not vex Zadok,  
Knowing that the king’s heart was his, except  
As warning against the warrior. And yet Joab  
Was chief of the hosts, and Zadok had been sent,  
At David’s will, to priest him; it would not do  
To nurse a private grudge in such crossed times.

The plump voice of Jehovah adjusted himself  
Upright upon a couch. “No easy matter,  
Seeing the king so fond of Jehovah worship,—  
Except in wives, who may bow to a pot of cheese,

## *THE DREAM OF ZADOK*

For all he cares, as long as they warm his blood.  
A score more wives since you left! And two—why,  
    beauty's  
A cheap word, when you see them. Three more son-  
    births;  
I come in there, you know; it keeps me busy,”  
While a deep sigh lifted his ample stomach.  
“It keeps me busy! . . . Where were we? Oh, this  
    business,  
These Kenites. What an impudent ancient piece  
Their leader is! Always snapping and fretting,  
Worrying over something. Such men must be  
Very unhappy.” He sighed in commiseration.  
“Well, you wanted to know—I talked this over  
With the king himself; your friend Abiathar  
Was there, pleased as a girl with a jewel, over  
A girl, indeed! A chit of a handmaid the King  
Of Tyre had sent him. Things somehow pass me by;  
Perhaps they think that I’m too old, or too godly,  
As Moses thru the desert. I use a sword,  
But not, as he, to halve my bed. I’ve always  
Pitied poor Zipporah, his wife; altho  
She managed somehow to get along; you know,  
The women always do.” And Zadok chuckled,  
A comfortable sound. Joab laughed too,  
Knowing of old the flowing measure of gossip  
The priest poured out for all.

“About these Kenites.  
You might have guessed his answer. And the god  
Will speak a word such as he always speaks,

## *JEHOVAH*

Spreading his glory. But let me tell you, Joab,"  
And the fat face threw off its mask of lightness,  
Grew stern and sardonic, showing the brutal power  
And craft that had raised its owner side by side  
With the son of the former priest, and kept him there,  
The secure favorite, guiding the ways of David,—  
"Let me tell you a vision that I had last night,  
Disturbed by this bleak dry desert air, and that moon  
That was my bed-mate. I think you will find in this  
An answer better than any words of mine,  
Both as to David's will,—and Lord Jehovah's."

## 2

### *The Death of a God*

I lay upon my couch, and the walls  
Of the tent opened, and the dome of the sky  
Was one tall tent covering me.

Then the walls of the sky opened,  
And all I saw was emptiness,  
Till up the horizon a great head  
Lifted, filling the third of the sky.

One eye was the sun, and one the moon.  
When the god rose, he filled the heaven.  
Before him the choiring morning-stars

Stepped, and the evening stars danced  
Gladly behind him. The hosts of the sky,

## *THE DREAM OF ZADOK*

Cherubs, and seraphs, were his train,  
Hundred thousands of hundred thousands.

His cloak was woven of all storm clouds,  
In his scabbard nested the lightning;  
Over his shoulder a club of thunder,—

And then his mouth was opened, and out  
Came all sweet sounds together blended.  
“They are all slain,” in shining tones,  
“The gods are all slain—save me, Jehovah!”

One squat hill reared above the plain:  
To it a figure climbed, and shouted:  
“I am Jehovah, and a god!”

Out of the mouth of the sky, the voice  
Shook into thunder, till all life trembled.  
“Baal is slain by the Tyrian sea,  
Dagon floats there, belly upward.

“Chemosh has died across his altar,  
Milcolm is a skull and splintered bones.  
The gods are all slain—and by Jehovah!

“I am Jehovah, the ancient of years,  
Sky-king, earth-king. And what are you,  
Voice breaking the quiet of my hills  
When all the voices of earth are sleeping?”

## *JEHOVAH*

“I am Jehovah, god of Mount Sinai,  
Son of the hill-clan of the Kenites,  
Now, after death, their god forever.”

“You should have died, as a man’s childhood!  
Who do you lift your voice to taunt me  
With the small seed from which grows power,  
With the low soil whence godhood springs?”

“I am indeed your childhood—eternally.  
I shall live on, that men may keep  
Knowledge of that from which you grew!”

“Man cannot grow to his height, till his childhood  
Stretches dead on its shattered altars.  
And I must kill you, I who love you,  
That I, your child, may be god in truth.”

“I am Jehovah—a young god.  
You shall not kill me, for fear the people  
Learn of the seed from which you blossomed!”

The figure turned to flee his hill,  
When out of the heaven the sky-god reached  
An arm like an endless range of mountains,  
With fingers like headlands that pierce the sea.

The fingers closed on the mountain figure:  
One choked gasp racked the night—then silence,  
And the hand sought again the heaven,

## *THE DREAM OF ZADOK*

With one more god slain on his altar,  
White and still on his lonely mountain.  
Thus Jehovah slew Jehovah:  
While out of the mouth of the sky, the voice

Whispered, like all sweet murmurs blended,  
“The gods are all slain,” in eternal tones,  
“There is no god—save me, Jehovah!”

### 3

Zadok’s tense form grew slack, as he ended the song;  
A sigh emptied his lungs. But Joab rose  
Joyfully, and strode to the tent flap, his hand  
Ready to fling it open. “There is the answer!  
This dream must be told to all—then to dismiss  
The Kenites, and march south—to its fulfillment!”

But Zadok shook his head. “There are some truths  
That are not for the crowd. What is my word,  
Or even a vision Jehovah sends, to what  
We have to speak his will—the gold-wrought ephod?  
This further, Joab: there is a pestilent brood  
Of trouble-makers among the tribes, who take  
Each chance to rail and snarl, in Jehovah’s name,  
Against the king and the nation.”

“The self-called prophets  
Who stir up the people?”

“You know them. One of the ranters,—  
Jotham, a man out of Succoth, in Gilead,

## *JEHOVAH*

A noisy nuisance—came on us at Hebron, and dared  
Chatter his speech against us there. The people—  
The army was away—they almost mobbed me,  
Driven mad by his froth.”

“You, David’s priest!  
If I had been there, with half a dozen companions—”

“You know the hillmen of Judah—braying wild asses.  
I quieted them somehow; the king’s guard was my  
answer,  
With a split head or two to point the moral.  
But this same plague of a mouther followed our train  
Here to the camp; we could not drive him off,  
Nor dam his muddy overflow of drivel.  
He’s somewhere near; let’s not give him this dream  
To babble over. Let Jehovah speak:  
He’ll hardly dare to dirty the word of the god.”

## 4

Facing the ranks of the Kenites, where Uz and the rest  
Waited in doubt and wonder, the gold-wrought ephod  
Tangled the rays of the sun, held some, flung others  
Brilliantly broadcast. Into the central space,  
While the long files of soldiers of Israel waited  
In silence, and Joab and all the chiefs stood hushed,  
The shining figure of Zadok waddled into view,  
His marble face quieting all levity. The breastplate  
Sparkled in twelve-fold beauty; the tinkling bells,  
Hung on the robe’s hem, gave the only sound

## THE DREAM OF ZADOK

In all the host. Out of their place he drew  
The sacred stones, the Urim and the Thummim,  
And took his accustomed stand before the image  
To cast the lots, that Jehovah's voice might be loosed.  
He poised expectantly; Joab came before him,  
Framing the opening question.

He did not ask it.

A shiver of tumult shook the nearer ranks;  
They eddied dizzily, and out of their heart  
A figure catapulted—a gaunt tall man,  
With thorn-gashed goat-hair mantle; and with beard,  
Hair, eyes, and manner, wild as a she-bear.

“Stay quiet!”

“Hold him!”

“Don't let the fool—”

“Be dumb,  
Let your profane tongues, that dare to jabber  
When Jehovah's prophet appears, drop out of your  
heads!”

He flung two last ones off, and came to Joab,  
Proudly, scornfully facing him. “A doom!  
A doom to those that scorn Jehovah's commands!  
The word of Jehovah has come to me, to Jotham,  
Bidding me cry his will to the four winds,  
To pierce like a knife the ears of all his children.  
Why do you hire an army of strong men, and lead them  
Over the peaceful earth, killing and slaying?  
Why do you march against the Lord's own servants,  
The Kenites, with vain hearts puffed up to slaughter?”

## *JEHOVAH*

From under his cloak he drew two pots—one small,  
One a huge vessel. He held them in the air.  
“Two pots: each can catch and hold the rain.  
Look—I dash them together. The small one shatters,  
There is but one left. Yes, and watch it now!”  
With terrible strength he flung it against a stone,—  
It broke with a noise like weapons meeting. “Both  
gone.

Two peoples: each can catch and hold the word  
Of Lord Jehovah. Dash them together, one breaks—  
The smaller. But the wrath of the Lord will burst  
The larger vessel, even you, O Israel!  
There is yet time! To your homes in peace—stretch  
not  
His patience, like a bow bent past its limit:  
For it will break—and woe to the peoples then!”

The prophet stopped for breath. Zadok had shrunk  
Against the ephod, ill at ease, yet determined  
To hold his place; he had the army here  
To comfort his heart. Joab ignored the man,  
Coming again forward.

Jotham swung round,  
Speaking again. “Woe to the fighters, whose chief  
Is a man of blood, stabbing the princes of the land!  
Woe to a land, whose priests grow gross as swine,  
Vast pot-bellied hungers, devouring its substance!  
Woe to a land, whose king seeks for strange women,  
Sprung of strange gods, scorners of Lord Jehovah!  
Will you return, O Israel? Back from this whoring

## *THE DREAM OF ZADOK*

After ways which the Lord has forbidden—and back  
To his ancient justice and faithful brotherhood!"

He paused—and in the rear some soldier's voice  
Lifted derisively the end of a song:

“Spear is brother to belly,  
Sword is brother to skull!”

Jotham cried on: “Woe to the land, which has strayed  
Too far from Jehovah's laws! In their priest's mouth  
He puts a lying spirit, to lead you to doom.  
Return, O Israel! Or this great doom—”

Joab broke thru: “Fellow, your words are wild,  
And yet Jehovah may have some part in you;  
So you shall not be harmed. Be silent, now,  
While great Jehovah's chosen priest consults  
The god himself. Be silent in his great moment,  
Or we shall make you silent!”

He turned to Zadok  
Scorning to waste another look on the prophet.  
“Ask of Jehovah, if the Kenite shepherds  
Worship his name.”

The priest prepared the stones:  
All watched him in still awe. Only Joab called  
“Jehovah, give a perfect lot!”

Then Zadok  
Looked up, startled. “Jehovah says—they do!”

## XI. A PROPHET IN ISRAEL

### 1

The shrill and sapless voice of Uz sliced thru  
The silence. "Great is Jehovah, and great his word!  
Now is lord Joab satisfied?"

Once again  
The words of Joab questioned the dumb god,  
Who found a tongue in the stones and the gold-wrought  
ephod:  
"Ask of Jehovah, if the Kenites serve him  
As he would be served."

The murmur rumbled softly  
Thru both the armies: "Give a perfect lot!"

The stones stilled to their rest. The priest spoke  
clearly:  
"The word of the god: not as he would be served."

A chill certainty of what cold horror  
The imminent speech of the god bore in its womb,  
Ripe to let fall, tightened the speech of Uz.  
He had faced lying foreign gods; he could face

## *A PROPHET IN ISRAEL*

This twisted tongue of a false-hearted throat of Jehovah.  
"Speak on," the words came stronger, "we would hear all.

But there is a truth-wrought ephod beneath Mount Sinai!"

"And truth is a tree, head downward, seen in a pool,"  
Scoffed Joab. "Truth is a man seen thru a mist;  
Truth is a stump that night has changed to a beast,—  
So the fool says in his heart. You would hear truth?  
Jehoshaphat, step forth and tell us truly  
Who are these Kenites who do not serve Jehovah  
As he would be served."

The sparse recorder raised  
His young, dried parchment face. "Who are these  
Kenites?

They are the sons of Cain, first-born of Adam,  
A brother-slayer; from him they get their name,  
From him, a fugitive and a vagabond  
Skulking from land to land, with the mark of the  
finger

Of God burnt on his forehead. So it is written  
In the book of Jasher."

## 2

"So, Cain-ites," Joab taunted,  
"You are the sons of him that flees in the night  
Forever from the face of man and God.  
How could such serve God rightly?"

## *JEHOVAH*

Uz stilled the wrath,  
Swollen and red, on the Kenite faces, and answered:  
“If this is true, Jehovah does not live!  
If this is true, may Jehovah cleave my skull!”  
He stood tense, head bared, waiting.

Again a voice  
Lifted the chorus:  
“—brother to skull, to skull!  
Spear is brother to belly,  
Sword is brother to skull!”

“He may take his own time about it,” Joab warned him.  
“You are still alive; would you push the plans of the  
gods?

As for this other, the book of Jasher has spoken.  
One question more of Jehovah. If these Cain-ites  
Refuse King’s David’s word, and will not bow  
Beneath his ox-yoke, and serve the lord Jehovah,  
Shall Israel go up to battle against them,  
Treating them as the word of the god has commanded  
His enemies shall be treated?”

Before the answer  
Came from the priest, as if the sky-god’s hand  
Wrote his own judgment on the page of heaven,  
The ground darkened, as the edge of a frowning cloud  
Moved from the north across the cheek of the sun,  
Dimming his smile. The heart of the cloud was black,  
Black as a rain-soaked tree-trunk seen at dusk;

## *A PROPHET IN ISRAEL*

Below its van a bleak wind shivered and whined,  
Driving the gray dust and the brown leaves southward.

“An omen!” Joab cried. “The cloud sweeps south!  
Jehovah, again your perfect lot!”

The priest

Ended; and in the sickly light of the sun  
His face glowed leprous, like an ailing moon.  
“The word of Jehovah: Israel shall go forth!”

“Lord Joab—” Uz dampened parched lips.

“The word

Is spoken! You yield to David the king?”

“We cannot;

Jehovah forbids us. He will protect—”

“No more!”

Joab thundered as a god might. “To your holes,  
Accursed brood of Cain! In the name of Jehovah  
We march on the hill-fiend you have dared to call  
By the holy name; and on your blasphemous tribe,  
Chaff before David’s fan, grass to his sickle!  
All we have done to Moab and Ammon and Amelek  
Is nothing. We shall come on you like a plague  
Of locusts; over a land rich for the harvest  
We pass—and it is a desert, desolate, lifeless.  
Your tented villages and your grazing ways  
Shall be full at morning of men and boys; by night

## ***JEHOVAH***

The soil shall be a sponge dipped in blood,  
Heavy with stilled hills of flesh and bone;  
The fowls of the air and the scavenger beasts shall glut  
Upon your sons, O Kenites, to the last one!  
No male shall be spared; the women swollen with child  
The sword of Jehovah shall rip open, to be sure  
No male escape! So shall your seed be ended.  
Your daughters who have wed men shall mate with the  
spear;  
The virginal shall dwell in far lands, slaves,  
Even to the last one. Your flocks and herds  
Alone shall prosper, the spoil of Jehovah and David.  
Cast away armor and weapons, while there is time,  
And flee to the forgotten rims of the world—  
For the wrath of God is marching upon the south,  
Over the desert, up the mountainous ways.  
Above our scourging ranks, his hosts of the sky,  
Cherub and seraph, morning and evening star,  
Gather against you. The trees shall shake with their  
tread,  
The pines and cedars rustle as his hosts pass  
Lightfooted above them—and nothing can stand before  
The might of their charge. Death drifts down from  
their wings,  
Vengeance and death. . . . The sword of the Lord is  
clean—  
So will your land be, when his doom is done;  
But the sword, the great blood-letter, will be red!  
Go! His lightning crouches in its scabbard  
Of cloud above you. Go, or his blade speaks now!"

## A PROPHET IN ISRAEL

### 3

So violently he spoke, the veins swelled out  
Like small ropes on his forehead. The Kenites turned,  
Following Uz, when a man came running heavily  
Into their midst.

“Shaaph!” cried Uz. “We missed you—  
Where have you been?”

Out of his shaken bosom  
The hot words tumbled. “Treachery, horrible treach-  
ery!

A voice came in my sleep, bidding me seek  
The southern road and the valley beyond, that leads  
To our camp, and the mountains. In the night I sought  
them;

Nothing stirred. . . . Then out of the furtive north,  
As the gray dawn changed to day, the sparkle of spears,  
The glitter of armor,—and southward marching,  
marching,

The thousands of David! O God! I was one man—  
What could I do? I sent the lad who was with me  
On wind-swift feet to our camp, and ran to you here.  
It is treachery, brothers! What of the truce they  
swore to?

Brothers—”

The distant humming of soldiers’ voices  
Swelled on the chorus:

“Spear is brother to belly,  
Sword is brother to skull!”

## *JEHOVAH*

But Shaaph cried on: “Treachery, horrible treachery!  
Speak, Uz, and stop it! By now those marching  
thousands

May have reached the valleys where trustingly our  
army

Waits for our word,—may have fallen on them with the  
sword,

Or circled our homes, burnt them, gutted the land  
Of wealth and our children and women—”

Uz heard no more,  
But cried to Joab: “You sent Abishai, then,  
To ravage our lands—before your gold god spoke?”

Joab’s eyes rolled in triumph to heaven:  
“The arm of Jehovah is long, spanning the earth;  
The sword of Jehovah is keen, spitting the mountains;  
The army of Jehovah sleeps not, but speeds to the  
slaughter!”

“Jehovah has betrayed us!” Jether burst out.

“Jehovah can not betray,” Uz chanted wildly;  
“His breast will be a shield before his children,  
His sword will ring them with safety! No power can  
shake

The man whose faith in Jehovah is firm. Lift, hearts,  
Joyfully to Jehovah! His faith is a shield  
Eternal, invincible! Come, let us flee  
Southward, to rouse his hosts against these wasters  
Who scorn his word from living lips of truth,

## *A PROPHET IN ISRAEL*

Even their prophet Jotham; but seek instead  
Abominations, hateful to his eyes;  
Who blaspheme of his name; who break sworn coven-  
ants—”

He choked. There was no answer. Then he turned,  
The Kenites following. Soon down the road  
Only a cloud of dust scattered and thinned,  
As fear of what they must find pushed their feet.

### 4

“Now sound the trumpets!” Joab commanded shrilly,  
The lust of the man-hunt hot, as the prey scuttled off.  
“Let half the thousands aim straight for the camp. . . .  
The rest, Benaiah, you will lead to David;  
It is his will. We hunt these dogs to the death—  
Abishai has them encircled. On, for Jehovah!  
Let no man harm the venerable skull of Uz  
On peril of death; I claim that for my sword!  
Now, trumpeters, blow!”

The great blasts shook the air,  
The wind shrieked from the southward-driving cloud,  
The thousands tallied, and took up the march in the dim  
Pallor of the throttled sunlight. Benaiah waited,  
Tallying those remaining—when out of the turmoil  
A high voice reached him, crying in woeful tones  
A woeful message. He saw him, the mad prophet,  
The man called Jotham, and neared him, to hear him  
better.

The warnings were flung against the tight-locked ears  
Of the thousands marching south.

## **JEHOVAH**

“A doom, O Israel!

Woe to them that have left the ways of Jehovah!

‘Am I not a god who lives in a tent?

What have I to do with the ways of Canaan?

“Israel has moved into cities, and Judah

Dwells in walled towns. They take the land in pledge.

Despoil the widowed and the fatherless,

Sell justice to the rich, trample the poor,

Pervert the sayings of them of ancient times;

What have I to do with the ways of Canaan?

“They have spit at my prophets, and sold their  
children for slaves;

They have bowed down to Baal and Asherah, serving  
them

With drunken embraces. . . . I am the Lord thy God!

They have set up a king to rule them, as do the heathen:

What have I to do with the ways of Canaan?

“Their kings have toyed with my law, and wed strange  
women,

Have taken the fields, the olive-yards and the vine-  
yards,

Bent the tribes with taxes, enslaved their children,

Raised up bloody strong men to curse the people—

What have I to do with the ways of Canaan?

“Return, O Israel! Return to Jehovah

While yet there is time!”

Benaiah listened attentively,

“What are his ways?” half scornful, half eager, he  
asked.

## XII. THE GOD GROWS

### 1

Benaiah answered his wonder. "I serve King David,  
The chief of these bloody strong men that vex your  
vision,

Keeping in order the unruly in Israel,  
And scouring danger out of his borders. I serve  
Jehovah as well as the king—and I wonder what  
You mean with your clashing words." He eyed the  
the prophet,

Uncertainly. "You seem so wrapped in your mission,  
As if your life, or your next meal, depended  
Upon it."

Jotham found his tongue. "Let priests,  
Like Abiathar and Zadok, prophesy for bread,  
Weigh out the words of God for food and shelter.  
Jehovah's spokesmen speak his messages, knowing  
That he whose compassion sent the rain of manna  
Will feed their needs. You say you serve Jehovah—  
Do you know who he is?"

"More than you do,  
And more than many say, or, indeed, see.  
He is the god of Israel, by the covenant

## *JEHOVAH*

That Moses made; before then, for all I know,  
The mountain deity that the Kenites grew,  
God out of fighting man. He was weak then,  
Mere lord of a mountain and one tribe; then, two.  
Now one of his tribes has spread like gossip over  
The lands of earth; and with it Jehovah has grown  
Lord of a swelling kingdom, conqueror of gods,  
Who squirm as slaves at his feet. If we conquer all  
lands,  
His realm above us would widen, as king of the gods;  
If the red-fingered Assyrian wake again,  
Or Egypt rouse, or any conqueror lessen us,  
So will Jehovah shrink."

"Blind heart, blind eye!  
Who would make a city Baal out of Jehovah,  
Couch him with Asherah, protectress of harvests,  
Send him reeling bloodily among the nations,  
Drunk with the wine of destruction! Blind eye, blind  
heart!"

Jotham raised his voice, as Benaiah's captains  
And groups of his soldiers neared to listen. "Sweet  
In the nostrils of Jehovah is the lamb  
Of the sacrifice—but not the fruits of the land.  
He has no joy in farm and orchard and vineyard.  
He takes no pleasure in cities; where is Gomorrah,  
And where is Sodom, that foul and leprous spot  
Whitening the land? So will all cities be  
When his wrath walks. The Canaanite dwelt in cities,  
When Moses and Joshua led the twelve tribes up;

## *THE GOD GROWS*

Theirs were the fertile grazing fields to possess,  
The rich rank pastures; but Jehovah forbade them  
Walled towns and farms, and their abominations.  
'Why have you strayed from my ways, O Israel?  
Why have your rulers turned my justice to gall,  
Bitter as wormwood? Are you not all brothers,  
David the king, and the beggar that drones in the  
bystreets,  
Zadok the priest, and the widowed and fatherless?  
I am thy God, that led thee out of Egypt  
To a pasture land flowing with milk and honey—  
To dwell in peace, not drive the wanton sword  
At innocent men,—not drive the blasphemous sword  
At men that worship me, as did these Kenites!'"

## 2

His words drove like a charge of chariots,  
Spreading dismay. Benaiah raised a hand  
Used to authority. "Not so fast. These Kenites,  
I well believe, worshiped Jehovah; but that  
Is not enough. His own words, out of the ephod,  
Damned them to death, if they refused—"

"Blind heart!

Blind eye, that cannot see when the sun is highest!  
Jehovah's word has come to his children, many  
And many a time. When they crawled over the desert,  
A tent folk, driving their flocks, it went before them,  
Flame by night and cloud by day. The flame  
Is gone from Judah, the cloud from Israel!

## *JEHOVAH]*

“When Deborah smote the Syrian, my justice  
Warmed the land like a cloak; the Canaanite  
Dwelt in his evil cities, and plowed his fields  
In Baal’s name: you slept in your hillside tents.  
The justice is fled from Judah, is stolen from Israel!

“When Gideon slew my foes, and Jair and Jephthah  
Judged out of Gilead, still my people followed  
The words of my heart. When Saul ruled, all my words  
And statutes walked the great roads and the small.  
My word is dead in Judah, and forgotten in Israel.

“Now they have reared my altar in Jerusalem  
Of the Canaanites. The sons of the town were spared,  
The daughters stretch their limbs on purple beds  
In the palaces of David and his princes.  
They have moved my ancient landmarks to build them  
mansions,  
Have added field to field to make a garden,  
Have taken usury, and pledges on land,  
Have married wives of the children of strange gods,  
Piled temples to them, with graven images—and there  
They serve the abomination of the Canaanite,  
Baal of Sidon, and Asherah of Tyre.  
These are their sins, in number like the sand grains.

“Yet now they enter thru my gate of reckoning!  
I have put a lying spirit in the mouths of prophets,  
Have twisted the tongues of priests, that they weave  
deceit,

## *THE GOD GROWS*

I have spoken no truth thru the ephod! The sin of  
Israel

Is not yet full, nor the iniquity of Judah  
Full to the brim. Yet a little longer,  
More sinning in city and field, more wasting of blood,  
As of the Kenites, and the doom is full—  
And desolation's dreariest desolation  
Shall cover hills and valleys and walled cities.  
There yet is time,' says Jehovah; 'Israel, come!'"

### 3

Benaiah shook his head. "You boast Jehovah  
Is thus and so; but what if you be wrong?  
I have done my share of braining his enemies:  
Two giant sons of Ariel of Moab; an Egyptian  
Five cubits high, with his own spear; a lion  
That sprang at me in a pit on a snowy day;  
An even three hundred Philistines at one time,  
All in Jehovah's name. Have you done as much?  
Where is your tally of skulls? Does this not give me  
A right to speak his mind? . . .

"I liked old Uz

And the Kenites. Joab, of late, is very tender  
To guard my safety; no post of danger—and honor—  
Falls to my lot; so, I am left behind  
To march to the king. Yet if the hour were different,  
No matter my liking, I might have gone to the south:  
By now this spear would have pricked its toll, shone gay  
In many coats of crimson stain, where men

## ***JEHOVAH***

Fall to our arms, and the tents are torched, and the  
flocks

And women divided. You say this is not of Jehovah;  
I say it is. How can man know? I seek  
That truth that Joab chaffed at, when Uz spoke."

Jotham's wild eyes snapped like sparks. "His truth?  
He has written it in the even fall of dew,  
He has painted it in the glory of the sunset,  
He has molded it into tree and beast and man!  
It sleeps in the rock, crawls in the serpent, and walks  
Erect in us! If Jehovah's careful fingers  
Shaped every stone and snake and man, can you think  
He wrought them to be broken and defaced  
By wanton killing? What his love has made  
He bids us guard. Is not this truth grown manifest  
In each live thing over the living lands?

"Jehovah is a god of brotherhood!  
If a brother be slain, is not the tribe brought low?  
For his tribe's sake shall he spare him. How then  
shall Israel  
Follow a king who sends them forth to earn  
Jehovah's finger-print on their brows—like Cain?"

### **4**

"The Kenites are not our brothers! They are a tribe  
Remote, alien," Benaiah tested him.

"No, all men are our brothers! Jehovah's tribe  
Is the world of men! His own hand shaped the world,

## *THE GOD GROWS*

Frilled it with leaf and blossom, loosed in the air  
His winged fowls, and peopled sea and land—  
All, all our brothers! At last he molded man  
In his own image, all of his mighty tribe,  
Crowding the highways and seaways of the earth,  
Living in love and peace. This is his will.  
Can you think otherwise? Do you think Baal,  
Chemosh, and Dagon, made the tribes of men  
That blunder after them? Jehovah made all!  
All are the children of his hand and heart.

“Baal-Zebub of Gath, Moloch of Ammon,  
The other defeated gods, were gods of bloodshed,  
Fattening on goblets of blood and reeking corpses.  
Jehovah is not so: his heart is torn  
When a spear tears the heart of one of his children;  
His soul is grieved at bloodshed. For each spilt drop  
Of blood, O Israel, his doom awaits you!  
Can you not melt your heart, and clear your eye  
To see his will, and do his will? Let peace  
Fall like rain on the lands, and dwell forever  
In the homes and hearts of all men! Let the seas  
Choir joyfully his love, and the stony wastes,  
The desert ways, and the mountain peaks, join voice  
To praise his loving kindness! Let the lion  
Lie down by the lamb in peace, and the sons of man  
Quiet their hatreds into songs of love,  
Forge of their spites and rancors a brotherhood  
Whole-hearted and eternal! This is his will!

“Then will the laughter of children lift to the sky,

## *JEHOVAH*

The songs of women resound, the flocks and herds  
Swell to a king's wealth. Love shall guard the high-  
ways,  
With joys for her strong men! Day will enter gladly,  
And men will mourn her going; night will drip  
Out of her restful wings a dreamless sleep,  
Joyous and peaceful. Men shall have chance to blos-  
som,  
In the earth-garden, up to their full stature,  
Shaping their lives into songs! This is his will  
To all men in his endless brotherhood!"

### 5

"I envy you your vision," Benaiah said.  
"This is a Jehovah that I had not dreamed,  
And yet may dream. . . . This, born of a fighting hill-  
god!  
And out of dreams come deeds. A world at peace!  
And if a man believed this—"

"Why, Benaiah!"

Thru the captains a round man waddled, sleek and smil-  
ing.  
"Not off for Hebron yet?" His quick eye caught  
The tattered prophet. "Listening to your doom?  
I wonder why Jehovah drives men mad,  
Like this poor earnest fellow. He has some purpose—  
Tho it is hard on us who have to bear  
The froth and fury. Come! I've a shrewd notion  
David has something hidden for you, that Joab

## *THE GOD GROWS*

Would give an arm to win! I know Bath-Sheba  
And little Solomon will dance when you enter!  
Come!"

Benaiah looked back, where the prophet stood  
Watching him. He sought to break loose from Zadok.  
"I'll follow. I've a whim to question this fellow."

Zadok laughed softly. "I forgot to say  
He holds a present for you, that the King of Tyre  
Sent down—ten talents of gold, and—I think—  
Three handmaids—Tyrians! Abiathar got  
But one. No; one is that little slut of Egypt—  
Remember? You won't be stingy, will you? . . .  
Come!"

Benaiah followed the priest. The captains scattered,  
Listening for the trumpet to start the marching.  
The soldiers sought new sport. Jotham was alone.

"And this they serve—a beast-god with four heads,  
Blood and Honor, Wealth and Lust—and him  
They dare to call Jehovah! When will they crush  
Each brutish head, and turn to the true god  
With earnest hearts? Then will Jehovah come  
Into his world-covering brotherhood  
Built upon love—and love is the mother of joy,  
And joy of beauty—and these are his three names.  
When will they come? Great lonely souls may find  
them;  
But for all men. . . ."

## *JEHOVAH*

He turned to the desert. There,  
Alone, he could dwell in love—love of the desert,  
Of dumb life, and of Jehovah. Beauty would blossom  
In flaming day and the shining sky of night;  
Joy would conquer his soul. What if the end  
Were a lonely whitened skull and crumbling bones,—  
He would have had love and joy and beauty. . . .

Yet northward  
Lay the sad kingdom of the forgetful tribes,  
Straying, straying bloodily. One bitter smile  
At what he taught men, and what they paid their  
prophets,—  
And then he turned his head from the quiet desert,  
And his feet found the familiar northern road.

## NOTES

---

*Page 4* I, 19, 20. *Sons of thundering Jehovah*: Budde's argument for the Kenite derivation of the Yahweh (Jehovah) cult is well sustained.—Louis Wallis' "Sociological Study of the Bible" (Chicago, 1912), 82. . . . Expressed in the language of sober historical narration, this covenant is nothing else than an alliance of Israel with the nomad tribe of the Kenites at Sinai, which had as its self-evident condition the adoption of their religion, Yahweh (Jehovah) worship.—Karl Budde's "Religion of Israel to the Exile" (New York, 1899), 24.

*Page 15*; II, 79. *Hill of Sin*: The general opinion of modern scholars is that the name "Sinai" is derived from the name of the Babylonian moon-god Sin.—Jewish Encyclopedia (New York, 1905), XI, 381.

*Page 31*; IV, 26. *Asherah of Tyre*: When Yahweh (Jehovah) gradually became Israel's local Baal he became worshiped like the old Canaanite deity, and all the sensuous accompaniments of the Kedeshoth, as well as the presence of the *asherah* or sacred pole, became attached to his cult. But the symbol carried with it the *numen* of the goddess symbolized, and there can be little doubt that Asherah came to be regarded as Yahweh's (Jehovah's) consort.—Encyc. Brit., 11th Ed., XIII, 180a. . . . The name of the tribe of Asher, too, suggests a god,—Asherah's male counterpart. There is no record of Jehovah's consort during pre-Mosaic Kenite days; tho, by analogy with neighboring religions, she probably existed. In the poem she is identified with the later Asherah.

*Page 76*; VIII, 163. *Ephod, Urim, Thummim*: When the people "inquired of Yahweh" (Jehovah) *they cast lots*. . . . The

## NOTES

Urim and Thummim were a kind of sacred dice, cast or shaken before a metallic image called an ephod.—Wallis, *supra*, 78, quoting Judges viii, 24-27 and I Samuel xiv, 38-42.

*Page 87; X, 39.* *Moses thru the desert:* Refers to the familiar Talmudic legend.

*Page 91; X, 136, 137.* *A pestilent brood of trouble-makers among the tribes:* As to the nature of these "insurgent" prophets, the following are cited: Their (the literary prophets') view of the "mishpat" (justice, clan ethics) of Yahweh (Jehovah) rests back on the social experience of Israel in the old, primitive nomadic life of the desert, in the period of the Judges, and in the time of the highland kingdom under Saul. . . . They (passages from Amos and Micah) are the outcries of two very bewildered countrymen, protesting in the name of their ancestral deity against conditions and practices that bear hard on the social class from which Amos and Micah sprang. The prejudice of the small, country property-holder against the wealthy class in the centers of population is so clearly in evidence that it cannot be denied. . . . Although the kings and wealthy officials were denounced by men like Amos, they were supported, on the other hand, by a large and influential class of prophets. . . . It is certain that the Rechabites (a primitive Hebrew sect) were ardent champions of Yahweh (Jehovah). They looked back longingly into earlier ages when the primitive, brotherhood *mishpat* (*supra*) of Yahweh (Jehovah) reigned without dispute among the clans of the desert. The life of these primitive tent-dwellers was a protest against the settled civilization of the ancient world; and many who did not follow their way of life shared their ideals. "I will yet again make thee to dwell in tents," wrote one of the prophets (*Hosea xii, 9*).—Wallis, *supra*, 150, 163, 164, 182-183.

*Page 97; XI, 26.* *Sons of Cain:* Cain, the eponym of the Kenites.—Encyc. Brit., 11th Ed., XI, 584b.











THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DATE  
STAMPED BELOW

**AN INITIAL FINE OF 25 CENTS**

WILL BE ASSESSED FOR FAILURE TO RETURN  
THIS BOOK ON THE DATE DUE. THE PENALTY  
WILL INCREASE TO 50 CENTS ON THE FOURTH  
DAY AND TO \$1.00 ON THE SEVENTH DAY  
OVERDUE.

APR 5 1940

OCT 8 1940

5Jun'58FF

May 2 1953 LU

12 Dec '62 AE

RECD LD

JAN 3 1963

200  
U. C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES



C051919082

439445

Ward

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

